

The Dragon

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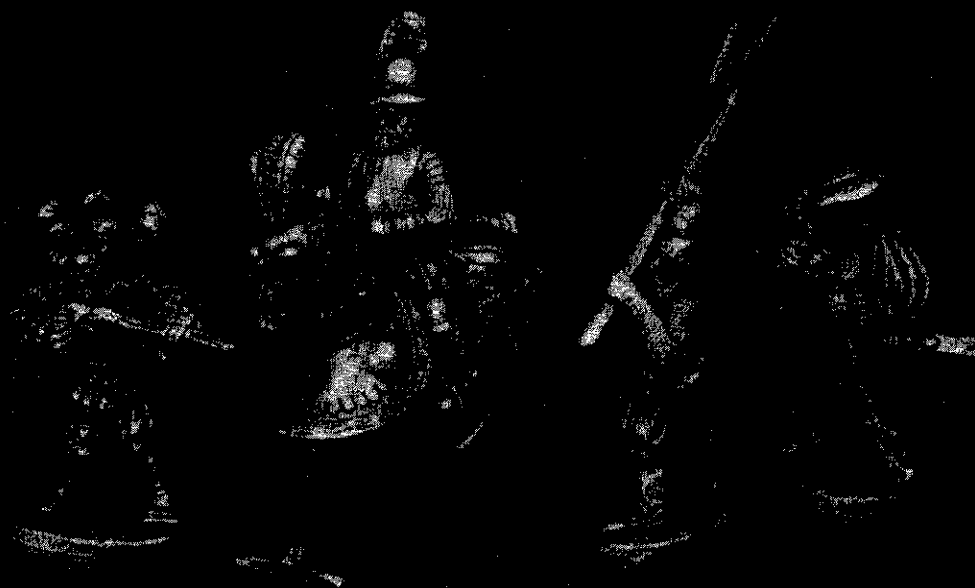
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As I am writing this (11 Sep), *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* is getting the publicity that we used to just dream about, back when we were freezing in Gary's basement in the beginning.

If we had our 'druthers', it would not have happened in such a fashion. By now, as you read this, I hope the mystery surrounding the disappearance of James Egbert has been happily resolved. Whatever the circumstances of the incident, it has been a nightmare for his parents and family, as well as for TSR Hobbies, Inc.

It has been speculated that James was involved in some sort of *D&D* game that went beyond the realm of pencil and paper roleplaying, and may have mutated into something tragic. *D&D* was seized upon as a possible connection to the disappearance, for a variety of reasons. First, James was an avid player. Indeed, I have met him at past conventions, and he used to subscribe to *TD*.

Secondly, there was the matter of the pins in the bulletin board, and the speculation that they formed some sort of clue *ala* a *D&D* map or clue. Added to this was the fact that the pins possibly resembled the steam tunnel system under James' college, and an anonymous tip that "live" games had been played out there in the past, as well as other places on the campus. Pictures of the map were sent to TSR, for analysis, with no concrete results.

Third, the day of his disappearance was the day prior to GENCON XII, and there have been reports that attendees think that they may have seen him at the con. Sadly, convention registration doesn't show him registered anywhere.

Finally, James has an IQ that qualifies him as a genius, and *D&D* is a very intricate and complex game, appealing to bright people. This was seen as sufficient evidence to possibly link the two, at least in the headlines.

Some of the reporting has been every bit as bizarre as the circumstances surrounding the whole affair.

The chief detective hired by the parents has made some incorrect statements regarding the game that have only fueled the controversy and added to the misconceptions surrounding it. Unfortunately, the nature of the incorrect answers has led to sensationalist type speculation. *D&D* has been described as a cult-like activity, and every editor knows that cults sell papers, or dogfood, in the case of TV.

These basic mistakes have linked the supposed method of playing *D&D* to this disappearance. The detective is quoted as saying, by both UP and AP, "You have a dungeon master — he designs the characters. Someone is put into the dungeon, and it's up to him to get out." He was further quoted as saying that ". . . in some instances when a person plays the game 'you actually leave your body and go out of your
(cont. on page 41)

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The Game's the Thing

... And I Used to Think GenCon Stood for General Confusion

Kim Mohan is the newest member of the staff at TSRP. He came to us as a result of writing a story about D&D and Gary Gygax for some mid-western papers. THE DRAGON is delighted to count him among our staffers, as he brings a great deal of newspaper experience with him. When he asked about a job, the aspect that sold me was that he was not a wargamer looking to work on a game magazine, but rather a journalist that also played some boardgames once in a while. He had never attended a con before, nor had he worked at one—a double virgin. After GenCon XII . . . , well read on for yourself. —ED.

Kim Mohan

I went to GenCon XII with the highest of expectations and the most optimistic of outlooks. I expected to be overwhelmed with the reality of thousands of gaming freaks right before my eyes, forming a community of their own (physically as well as philosophically) for the all-too-few days they'd have together.

I came home from GenCon XII with sore feet, a near-empty gas tank, And a germinating head cold that is running amok in my sinuses even as I write this. I got about six hours of sleep over three days and two nights. I ate brownies for breakfast and Cokes for lunch and supper. I didn't hear any of the seminars that looked so appealing in the program booklet. I didn't enter a tournament or even play a "roadside" game with anyone. I really shouldn't complain about this, but I didn't even spend much money.

And I loved every minute.

* * *

We had it all figured out. My assignment, should I choose to accept it, was to spend as much time as I could on the UW-Parkside premises, lugging a camera case, so I could soak up atmosphere and snap a few pictures. Then I would write about what it's like to attend GenCon (or any con, for that matter), for the first time. And we'd have some snazzy color photos to use along with the article.

We had it all figured out . . . until I showed up Friday morning.

I found Parkside (easy), parked in the lot with the most cars (a logical guess), and went on a trek for the nearest door (gotta start somewhere).

I found a set of locked doors marked "Dealer Access Only," and I could see a sign that said "Dealer Area Open 10-6." It was only 9:15, but there were already throngs of people milling around in what sure looked like a "Dealer Area" to me.

I wasn't a dealer. I didn't have a name tag at all. But I worked at a newspaper for nine years, and I learned that you can always knock on a locked door, even if you can't do anything else with it.

I knocked and I, even though obviously a non-dealer, was admitted by a gent who shall remain anonymous but forever in my debt. This was my first clue: Gamers are good people, I said to myself. "Thanks a lot," I smiled to my benefactor.

It took me about half an hour to make sure I had covered every

(cont. on page 39)



A Miniature Marvel of Monsters, Mayhem and Miscellany

Steve Brown



**The Orc Inn,
with reserved
parking for
important chariots**

(When Steve Brown showed up at GenCon XII, he wanted to enter his fantastic "underground orc castle" in the figure painting contest sponsored by TSR Periodicals. It didn't qualify for any category, but we couldn't ignore it! Steve got a special award, The Dragon got some photographs of his work, and Steve talked into a tape recorder for a while to provide this "guided tour" for TD's readers.)

Welcome, ladies and gentlemen, to this special guided tour of the secret underground castle of the orcs. Please stay with the group at all times, and don't touch anything if you want to leave with the same number of fingers you came with.

Now we're just inside the main gate, where we can see a party of sentry orcs preparing to scout the area for unaccompanied humans and other creatures. The orcs fancy themselves a very cultured group and

want to keep the riff-raff humans, elves and dwarves out of the area.

The best in orc lodging is available at the inn, and the prices are right. According to the sign, it's 4 cp a night for a bed, 6 cp for a pot-luck dinner, 2 cp for housekeeping, but there's a limit of five to a bed.

The guard dog at the gate seems to be giving a passer-by a little trouble, but all he can do is growl as long as he's chained to the wall. Near the gate is a party of scavengers coming back with more wood for construction inside the castle.

Now we're passing the parking-lot area, which contains two of the orcs' more impressive chariots: The big, bad Lord's chariot and the "living chariot" of the Wizard, with eyes that glow!

**Weapons, weapons
everywhere
in the guard room**



Follow me past the loading-dock area into the guard room. As we enter, you can see on the left the commander's office, his desk, recruiting posters, and bulletin board. The commander's bedroom is upstairs.

The guard room also serves as an armory, where all the orcs' weapons are kept in case of a combat alert. The soldiers have a

fireman's pole to slide down so they can answer an alert in less time than it takes to eat a hobbit. The armory is full of captured weapons, everything from crossbows to dwarven hammers, which are prizes from past conquests.

You can get anything you want at the Green Slime Grill



Now we're down to the second level, where one of the main attractions is the Singing One's Tavern and Green Slime Grill.

As we enter (keep single file against the wall, please), it's obvious that the orcs here are having one heck of a good time. Most of them are just singing and carousing, but there's a small fight going on in the back of the bar. Two greater orcs seem to have the upper hand against five or six lesser orcs, who should have known better.

The piano player, bless his little green heart, is doing his best to drown out the noise. Several patrons are sprawled out after emptying too many tankards and don't seem to care a bit about the commotion. It

takes a special kind of bartender to keep the spirits flowing for this many revelers. The mixologist on duty, as you can see, comes adequately outfitted with an extra pair of arms.

The Green Slime Grill has an excellent menu offering the finest in orcish cuisine, such as slop, swill and gruel. Specialties of the house include a hobbit for 1 sp (cheese is 2 cp extra); elf (in season) for 3 sp; roast dwarf for 1 gp, and roast baby for 2 gp. We can't stop to eat now, but the next time you have the chance, stop at the sign of the golden orches for a McGoblin's quarter-pound hobbitburger!



The kitchen and wine cellar are popular spots

Mad Ruthie, the castle cook, has a big job keeping the kitchen stocked. The fireplace is lit at all hours of the day and night so a new feast can be prepared at any time. After all, there are only a couple of things orcs like to do more than eat. Although none of them have terribly sensitive taste buds, they like to think they do. That's why the pantry, next to the kitchen, is loaded with such a variety of vittles: hams, geese, ducks, rabbits, canned goods, cheeses; you name it and the orcs have it, or they can get it — cheaper than wholesale!

Let's move quickly through the wine cellar; there seems to be a young orc making a proposition to a female along the back wall, and we don't want to embarrass him. The only thing worse than an embarrassed orc is an embarrassed orc who's hungry. Above the wine cellar is the accountant's office. He is reputed to be one of the wealthiest inhabitants of this underground world, although none of the orcs can figure out why since his restaurant keeps showing a loss every year.



The barber (left); A good hunt (above)



Toward the far side of the room, two orcs are engaged in a boxing match to settle some sort of grudge (the score of the last billiards game?). One of them just got it right in the chops, and most of the crowd seems pleased with what's going on. One spectator seems a little sad, probably because the fighter he bet on is going down for the count — and when orcs count a fighter out, they count to 1,000.



'Happy Days' was never like this!

Here's the third level, where the first room we'll visit is the barber shop.

The barber usually has other things on his mind besides cutting hair, as you can see by the price list. He only charges 2 cp for a haircut and 1 cp for a shave — but if you want it without nicks, that'll be 9 cp extra. He'll also sharpen fangs for 4 cp each (assuming, of course, that his insurance policy is paid up). Notice the barbershop's "wallpaper": if you could stand around and look at that all day, you wouldn't care much about cutting hair, either.

Now we're in the orcs' recreation room, where a lot of the hard, serious business of relaxing goes on. The game of billiards is different from the one humans play; as you can see, the balls aren't marked as stripes and solids because the orcs don't believe in discrimination. Of course, that makes it hard to keep score, and that leads to fights — which is what orc recreation is all about anyway!

Look on the back wall and you'll notice that the orcs had a successful hunt sometime around last Christmas. They managed to bag the jolly old gent himself and six of his reindeer — but Rudolph got away.

At our first stop on the fourth level, I'm sure you'll agree that high school, orc style, is a one-of-a-kind educational experience. We happen to have come in the middle of the J. Ripper High School senior class party. As you can see, the graduates are adults already when it comes to knowing how to have a good time. We'll see some female orcs later, and then you'll understand why male orcs prefer human women.

The next room is the king's chamber. Judging by the surroundings, the king's tastes are very simple. He has a pile of straw to sleep on and a couple of barrels of wine in the back of the room for entertaining. It's a

The throne room, and a peek at the queen



good thing the monarch doesn't live more magnificently, or the sleepy-eyed guard at the door would be in severe jeopardy.

We're in luck; there's some activity in the throne room. The dancing girls are out in force, and they have attracted quite a crowd. Take a good look and remember that these are the most sensuous of all orc females — and then try to imagine what the least sensuous look like!

The musicians are playing hard, and have a good vantage point from the balcony overlooking the throne room. The band is made up of musicians who led the orc old guard into battle — including a cello player

and a kettle drummer who used to have a terrible time staying in formation.

Next we get a glimpse of the queen's chamber. Stay away from the desk where she keeps all her important books and documents; the leopards are trained to chomp first and ask questions later — if anyone's left to answer. The queen is enjoying a meal, surrounded by the little things that make a home a cherished place, like a statue of her favorite hereo, Sinbad the Duck, and an urn in the back of the room containing the ashes of her last 15 husbands.



The bazaar (left): A shopping center to end all shopping centers

On the fifth level, the first room we come to is the chamber of the Phantom Orc of the Opera. His massive pipe organ bellows out ballads, hymns, and an occasional "Happy Orcday" for various ceremonies.

We'll walk quickly and quietly through the temple, where some sort of service seems to be in progress. It's very hard to tell which kind; the orcs worship dozens of gods, on the "better safe than sorry" philosophy.

The largest room in the castle is the Grand Bazaar, which has merchandise to appeal to anyone with some gold to spend. The Pied Piper Shop (with P.P. himself as proprietor) sells all kinds of musical instruments. At Ali Baba's Used Carpets, only the finest fabrics are sold, and each item is guaranteed to fly for a few feet or a few seconds, whichever comes first. The Genie Travel Agency offers guided tours to any other land or fantasy world. Specials this week, according to the posters, are Narnia, Arkham and Middle Earth.

Next in line is the local Head Shop. If you want to get ahead in life, you can simply come here and buy one. There's the Sign Shop, where any orcish slogan can be made to order. The owner says two of his biggest sellers are, "Before you meet the handsome prince you have to kiss a lot of toads" and "When I works, I words hard; when I sits, I sits loose; and when I thinks, I falls asleep." The last shop in the bazaar is Aladdin's Hardware, which sells everything from copper pots to window glass and hands out a free golden lamp for every purchase over 1,000 gp.



The Phantom Orc of the Opera plays on



The doctor, the wizard, and the banker — A terrible trio indeed!

We're on the sixth level now, nearing the bottom. The first stop here is the banker's vault, where the castle's valuables are kept. Keep your hands down, move fast, and don't touch so much as a copper piece! Everything is guarded by giant spiders, and there is no saving throw.

Next in line is the Wizard's workshop. The mage has a new apprentice he's breaking in (so to speak), and I think I see the hand of the old apprentice sticking out of the pot of boiling oil in the background. You can see the Wizard is a nature lover, with a butterfly collection and many other animals on display throughout his workshop. He reportedly uses

the animals in spells, but for some reason the SPCA hasn't done anything about that. I heard a rumor that the last two inspectors who came to see him are now perched on the toadstools over there.

Next to the Wizard is the library, where there are many, many volumes of orcish lore — just in case someone loses his wits and feels like reading in his spare time. Keep very still as you tiptoe past the chess game; the last tourist who disturbed these guys was, shall we say, checkmated in one move.

Here is the Wizard's bedroom, where no doubt many a diabolical

The Dragon

scheme has been hatched. The Wizard's consort, the Falcon Lady, is feeding one of her birds while a black cat looks on.

Next to the bedroom (a very good place for it) is the water closet. Because orcs aren't modest, plus the fact that this is the only "facility" in the castle, there's a mixed crowd in here at all times.

In the doctor's office, we're lucky enough to be able to see an operation in progress — in other words, an operation where the patient

is still breathing. Doc says he's licensed to treat man or beast, but some of the castle residents are a little skeptical of his qualifications. Doc keeps saying he'd send away for another coy of his license as soon as he can collect from one of his patients. The problem is, he can't get anybody to pay before an operation, and so far no one has been able to pay afterward, either.



**Things go better
with torture —
as long as
it's someone else's**

**The cold, cold crypt
and the
hot, hot furnace**



This is as low as we go, folks: the seventh level. The last segment of our tour starts with the torture chamber, where orcs go when they *really* need to relax. All sorts of fun diversions are possible here, including the brick wall which is going up around the lady in the far corner, the rack, some good old boiling oil, and the stock. If you've ever wondered about the fate of that unlucky member of your party who was carried off by orcs, this was the last room the poor guy ever saw.

Orcs don't have anything to do with the crypt, preferring to let their buddies the skeletons and mummies handle the sort of work they like so well. In the doorway is a mummy apparently on his way to our next stop, the wargame room, carrying a model of a Sherman tank.

No basement would be complete without a wargame room, and here's the one the orcs have fixed up for themselves. Four hard-core gamers are occupied right now with their micro-armor, playing out a battle on a special table complete with terrain features just like the one you may have at home. I apologize for the appearance of this room; as

with all other wargame rooms, it is constantly cluttered with junk.

The next and last stop is the furnace room. The orcs, just as patriotic as you or I when it comes to conserving energy, have harnessed a Fire Elemental to provide heat by directing his radiation up into the heating ducts which serve the rest of the castle. (The furnace room is quite warm enough without its own heating duct, don't you think?) Right now all the coal-gang orcs are gone for their 10th dinner break of the day. When they get back, they'll dish out some more tasty, low-sulfur coal, to keep their heater happy.

* * *

That concludes our tour, ladies and gentlemen. Thanks for coming along, and now if you'll excuse me, it's time for my dinner break.

Oh, didn't I tell you? *This* is where the tour ends. Anyone who wants to get out has to find his own way back to the first level. Good luck, and (heh, heh) I'll see you at the dinner table in a little while!

The Cost: A Lot of Hours, A Lot of Figures, and . . .

Steve Brown

It took almost a year of off-and-on work to design and build the underground orc castle. I don't have a good idea of just how many hours were spent, but it was a lot. (Editor's note: The castle carried a "firm" price tag of \$4,000 when it was exhibited at GenCon XII. Reportedly, at least one person was *almost* willing to shell out that much cash to take it home.)

Materials used in construction included textured styrofoam, cork, wallboard, balsa wood, plywood, Popsicle sticks, wood shingles, spackling paste . . . whatever seemed appropriate for a certain room.

About 75 percent of the figures are conversions — some minor, some radical. Probably the hardest part of the whole project was cutting all the bases off the figures without cutting off their feet, too.

Almost all the figures, 99 percent-plus, were done with Heritage paints. Otherwise, it would have taken years just to paint everything.

The pipe organ in the Chamber of the Phantom Orc of the Opera was a dime-store item to which I added many dollars' worth of cut brass tubing. The eyes in the chariot and the fire in the fireplace are illuminated by light-emitting diodes powered by flashlight batteries.

At present the three lower levels have lighting; the other levels will be lit up later on. The lights are powered by a regular model train transformer with a variable rheostat so they can be dimmed or brightened. My brother-in-law, Bill Cikas, helped me with the circuitry for the LEDs in the chariot eyes and the fireplace.

Many of the items were from different scales, such as the chess set in

the library, which was a 54mm piece that had to be cut down. The pots and pans in the kitchen came from a dollhouse shop, and they were supposed to be for 1:1 scale, but they were all that was available and had to be used. The piano player in the bar was a 54mm plastic figure which had to be chopped down quite a bit. His legs were cut off at the knees and the feet glued back on, and his arms were cut off at the elbows and the hands glued back on. Then an orc head was added. The piano and chair also had to be cut down to bring them into scale. Whenever I find anything I think I can use, I'll get it even if it's not the right scale, and then I'll cut it down.

I got a lot of help from friends who donated things, like Doug Rogers, who supplied the table for the doctor's office; Gary Campbell, who gave me the baby orcs; Beverly Mason, the source of the organ player and some furniture; and Cliff Wilson, from whom came a couple of the priests in the temple.

Many of the posters and signs were either made with transfer lettering or were found in railroad decorations or trimmed from mail-order catalogs.

Next year, with the help of many of the dealers who were present at GenCon XII, I hope to be able to show a couple of wings I'll be adding on to the main structure. Many manufacturers have been kind enough to help me by offering figures, other materials, and ideas.

What's the main reason for the success of this project? It was not skill, or craftsmanship, or attention to detail, although all of that did matter. The main ingredient was imagination, with a little sense of humor — and a large junk box.

Good Evening

Are You Wild About Vampires? Here's Something to Sink Your Teeth Into

This is the first installment in what we plan to make into a monthly feature. From the title, you may notice a connection to AD&D. If you read the forwards and prefaces in a number of the D&D and AD&D books, you will notice the author's name mentioned in most, if not all, of them. That he can speak with authority is authenticated there. —ED.

Lenard Lakofka

There is much information on the Vampire, but just as much is left unsaid and unquantified when the details of the play of the monster are studied. While many of the things stated about the Vampire herein may seem obvious, nevertheless arguments on each of these topics have arisen in this DM's experience.

The Vampire has $8 + 3$ hit dice, and once calculated the hit point total will not vary; thus, when the monster regenerates in its coffin a new hit point total is not generated. A Vampire can have its minions buy a figure it has killed so that human can rise as a Vampire on the next night. Note that humanoids and demihumans can NOT become vampires.

In theory, since the "draining" of a figure is due to the Negative Material Plane force, a humanoid or demihuman "drained" by a Vampire might become a lesser Undead that exists on the Negative Material Plane. However, this makes the Vampire too strong and is not allowed.

It should be noted that a Vampire is unlikely to want too many other "lesser" Vampires under his/her control. Thus the number of vampires under the control of a full $8 + 3$ h.d. Vampire should be limited to no more than four at one time. If this rule is not observed, entire small towns would be full of Vampires in the span of a few short weeks! Furthermore, "lesser" Vampires will not create other "lesser" Vampires answerable to themselves; only the Full Vampire will create "lesser" Vampires as a matter of will and choice. Inadvertent creation of a Vampire is possible in either case if a body killed by a Vampire is buried and subsequently the body is dug up (assuming that the burying of the Vampire's kill does not properly prevent the body from rising again as a Vampire).

This brings up the point of how a body can be properly "disposed of" after being killed by a Vampire or a "lesser" Vampire. This process should be a simple one and accomplishable in a few ways: 1. The body and head can be separated; 2. The body can be burned; 3. The body can be disposed of just as a Vampire would be disposed of; or 4. The body is drained of blood and either a Bless, Prayer, Chant or Exorcism is said over the corpse. Other reasonable means can be ruled on by the DM.

The Vampire's existence on the Negative Material Plane is such that normal Invisibility can be foiled by his/her ability to see into another plane. My personal ruling in this regard is a range of 40 feet with a 50% chance per direct viewing (that is, looking right at the invisible creature/object) of seeing the invisible object. Naturally the size of the invisible object can vary this percentage. The Vampire also has a 5% natural chance to observe Invisibility due to its level and intelligence (see the *Dungeon Masters' Guide*).

Other Vampire Forms

The Vampire has the ability to become a Giant Bat and also a

Welcome to

Deomund's Tiny Mat



Gaseous Cloud at will. This transformation is very rapid (taking only 1–4 segments with the 4 segments only being used if the Vampire is surprised) and the new form can operate after but a 1-segment delay; this applies to the alternate forms of Bat to Cloud, Cloud to Vampire, etc. In the Bat and Cloud forms the abilities of the Vampire are, at best, poorly defined. First of all, the Vampire can not Drain, Summon, Charm or use its physical strength in either form. Changing to another form will cause all carried items to change also.

As a Bat, the monster has the following statistics:

Hit Dice (for attack purposes) $2 + 1$; Hit points are based upon its full hit die potential; Move 18"; Damage per attack 1–2 but not draining ability; susceptibility to spells is just the same as in Vampire form (a full list of spell immunities follows); a magic weapon IS needed to inflict damage. The Bat can see with the Vampire's eyes (i.e., it has Infravision) but it can not detect Invisibility. The vampire does not regenerate in the Bat form. The Bat has only minor existence on the Negative Material Plane, so there is no draining of levels or strength by the Bat's attack

(touch). The Bat form never has any abilities of the Vampire's former profession in life. The Bat is not an animal in any way, so spells affecting animals only do not come into play. However, if the Vampire summons Bats and then turns into a Bat himself/herself, he/she can lead the summoned bats in some direction, even away from a party. It can not Command the bats in the classic sense; it can only obtain reaction by its own example, which the bats will mimic.

In Gaseous form, the Vampire has different abilities and characteristics.

Its sense of vision is reduced and it can not see with 20/20 vision nor with Infravision; a *slight* blurring effect comes into play. The Gaseous Cloud can move at 6" (faster than the Potion-bestowed Gaseous Form). It has no hit dice, attack abilities, regeneration abilities, summon abilities, harm abilities or drain abilities. It is immune to all magic except Fireball, Lightning Bolt (½ damage), Cold (½ damage), Air Elementals (double damage; this includes Djinni Whirlwinds) and Gust of Wind (which can overcome the 6" movement speed).

Even if the Vampire is "scattered to the four winds" it can re-form, given time (1-100 rounds; the decision must be based upon conditions). If it is split up and cannot re-form (part is in a container like a bottle, or part is on one side of a wall and part on the other with the connecting hole blocked), the Vampire is not killed unless he/she is exposed to sunlight or unless he/she was on the way back to his/her coffin because of a **forced** assumption of the Gaseous Form. If underground, the two parts could remain apart for years and still re-form; however, if the coffin has been disposed of while he/she was split up, then another matter arises. In Cloud form the Vampire is absolutely free to move as he/she chooses if he/she has not been **forced** into Gaseous Form (i.e., lost all hit points due to combat). If the Vampire is forced into Gaseous Form, he/she must make for his/her coffin by a reasonably direct route (no going out of the way to cross a river or bog).

The Cloud form can re-form quickly; it can also ooze through any space that is not airtight. It can even seep through soil that is not too moist at the rate of 1" per hour. In Gaseous Form, the Vampire has almost no Negative Plane existence, but the link is not completely broken. Note that if hard-pressed, a Vampire may break off melee by assuming Gaseous Form.

It is a wise decision to set a hit point total at which the Vampire will automatically go Gaseous in the next melee round. The Vampire, is, after all, a very intelligent monster and he/she will not waste himself/herself on Forced Gaseous Form if he/she can avoid it. During forced assumption of Gaseous Form, the Vampire is **most** vulnerable, since he/she can not do anything at all for 8 hours after entering his/her coffin in the Cloud form. Note also that if the Vampire is beyond the 2-hour limit of travel to reach his coffin, he/she will most certainly assume Gaseous Form before being forced into the situation!

Note that if the Vampire takes damage from one of the listed spells while in "Free will Gaseous Form" it could lose all hit points (remember, it does not regenerate in this form) and be forced to go to its coffin at once.

Immunity to Spells

The next subject concerning the Vampire is its immunities to various spells and spell forms. Clearly the Vampire is immune to Sleep, all Charms, all Holds, Poison and Paralyzation. In like manner, it is obviously immune to Death Magic. Under the realm of Charms and Holds, it is a logical extension that Suggestion will not work either. However, arguments from two different points of view can be offered in the case of Fear, Confusion, Magic Jar, Cause Wounds, Disease, or Blindness; Friends, Web, Stinking Cloud, Enfeeblement, Illusions, Polymorphs, Feeblemind, Raise Dead, Reincarnation, Power Word Stun and a few others I have yet to run into.

I rule that the following spells do not affect a Vampire, as extensions of its normal immunities; Fear, Friends, Stinking Cloud, Illusions that charm in some way, Raise Dead and Reincarnation.

Spells that fully effect a Vampire are Confusion, Magic Jar, Cause Wounds, Cause Blindness (if the Vampire must be touched, the loss of 2 levels is automatic — figure who delivers a spell by touch must do so

with the bare hand, never with a gloved or covered hand!), Feeblemind and Power Word Stun.

Spells that I rule as variable in effect are Cause Disease (the Vampire can throw this one off by returning to his/her coffin for 8 hours of rest); Web (the Vampire has two ways out; Gaseous Cloud, and because he/she exists on another plane the Web can, at best, be half strength against the monster — one-fourth, if a saving throw is made. It takes a Vampire but 1-4 segments to become Gaseous, but he/she must remain in that form for a full round before taking normal or Bat shape.); Enfeeblement (since the monster is already dead and since the spell is based upon Cold, I rule that this spell has only half effect, or no effect if the normal saving throw is made.); Polymorphs (since the Vampire is an inherent shapechanger — though limited — as to what forms it can take — polymorphing the monster is only *temporary* in effect. The Vampire can shapechange back to normal form, Bat or Cloud on the next melee round. It is illogical to have an Undead become an elf, a red dragon or a beetle, since by its non-living nature the resultant polymorph will also be "non-living". Thus, a polymorph of an Undead always results in an Undead, but the polymorph would not have the powers and abilities of the new or old form, save for locomotion and speech. This rule prevents an evil MU from making a Shadow in a Wraith, e.g.). It is also noted that Vampires take but half damage from Cold and Electricity, but of course if a saving throw is made the damage is one-fourth. Note that a "Flame Tongue" or a "Frost Brand" sword does not prevent normal regeneration of hit points to a Vampire.

Regeneration

Regeneration is the next topic for discussion. The Vampire does not regenerate any points in Bat or Gaseous Form. It must be in "human" shape to regenerate. Note that regeneration, as well as other Vampire powers, are possible deep underground regardless of the time of day outside.

I rule the following way when it comes to what constitutes "deep underground." If the Vampire is abroad, goes outside, or sees daylight (he/she does *not* have to be *exposed* to daylight) he/she must return to the coffin at the next daylight period and must remain there through the day. However, if the coffin lid is opened in a non-daylight/sunlight situation, the Vampire can defend him/herself! Thus, the old canard about attacking a Vampire during the day is false!

Remember, this is not the Bram Stoker Vampire, this is the *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* Vampire. The AD&D Vampire drains levels due to negative plane coexistence and does not necessarily bite the victim. Even if "far beneath the surface of the ground," the Vampire must return to his/her coffin eventually — I rule *once* each week. If the Vampire does not return to his/her coffin: 1. Within a week if underground the full time; 2. Each night if exposed to the outside (including seeing daylight), or 3. Within 3 hours of being reduced by melee (damaged) to zero points, the monster crosses over to the Negative Plane exclusively and can not return. On the Negative Plane the monster is virtually powerless, as its powers come from the *coexistence* on two planes. If he/she does go to the Negative Plane, all carried items remain behind.

The next big area of argument comes over what type of monster results when a Vampire kills a human, the human is buried, and then is unearthed the next night (or later). How the figure is killed is one major bone of contention: Does the figure die due to damage or due to being drained to zero level? If the figure dies due to damage (not all necessarily from the Vampire), then the figure can retain abilities from his/her former profession. If a 12th-level Wizard, for example, is wounded by some form of attack and is then touched by a Vampire such that he becomes a Necromancer but is also killed due to damage of the Vampire's touch, the resultant monster will be a "lesser" Vampire who is also a Necromancer!

This Vampire must read his spells just as before and rest periods are the same but are only allowed in the coffin. Since the figure is not alive, however, he may not again become a Wizard by experience, nor may he learn new spells. Furthermore, items that require a touch of a human hand (like a Wand, for example) will not function in his hand since he is not alive. As DM, you can rule in numerous ways as to which items need

the touch of a living hand (body) in order to function. This rule limits the power of the Vampire Spellcaster. If the figure dies by full draining, then all former profession abilities and levels are lost — the figure is a vampire, nothing more. It should be noted that a Vampire does not willingly want a “lesser” vampire whose profession level is very high (7th level or higher) since if the “lesser” ever gains full Vampire status he/she may not be friendly to his/her former master.

The “Lesser” Vampire

Exactly what is a “lesser” Vampire (“... appropriately strengthened vampire under control of its slayer.” AD&D Monster Manual, page 99)? He or she is the monster created by a Full Vampire after killing/draining the victim. This monster follows, to some degree, the rules set for Negative Plane Undead.

If a Wight kills a figure, a “. . . half-strength wight under (its) control . . .” will result. The same statement is made for the Wraith and the Spectre. Yet, “If the vampire which slew the creature is itself killed, the vampires created by it become free willed monsters.”

Somehow all of this must be quantified. First of all, the “lesser” vampire is under the control of the Full Vampire even if killed by another “lesser” vampire. As long as the Full Vampire maintains control, the “lesser’s” will be subject to his/her command.

Now the questions arise; is the “lesser” vampire half-strength or not, and if it is released to become “free willed” does it then grow to full strength? I’d say that the Vampire is $\frac{3}{4}$ strength, and if control is lost the vampire grows to Full Vampire status. To put this in rule form: A “lesser” Vampire must be uncontrolled for 7 days before it will become “free willed.” Thus, if the Full Vampire gives commands or is present within 7 days the “lesser” vampire remains a “lesser” vampire. If the “lesser” becomes “free willed” it will take two full days to grow to Full Vampire status. Once it has “free will,” the Full Vampire can not regain control, though it can have all of its statements take on the power of a Suggestion which the new “free willed Vampire” can Save versus. While this may seem like a contradiction of the “charm” rule, consider the circumstances of the exchange and the existing relationship. Note that the Full Vampire did not have to Charm the “lesser” vampire while the “lesser” was still alive!

The statistics for the “lesser” Vampire are as follows; 6 + 2 hit dice, A.C. 2, Move 12/18, Damage per attack 5-10; Special Attacks: Energy Drain*; Special Defenses: +1 or better to hit but Silver does half damage; Magic Resistance: As discussed in this article and as with a Full Vampire.

The importance differences are due to the fact that the “lesser” does not exist as strongly on the Negative Material Plane as the Full Vampire. If uncontrolled, the “lesser” has the “free will” to gain full Negative Plane access. Note the fewer hit dice. The Energy Drain of the “lesser” vampire is one level, plus a 50% chance for a second level to be drained. Note that Silver weapons do half damage. Finally, the “lesser” Vampire IS subject to a Raise Dead spell, if it fails its saving throw versus magic. The “lesser’s” former profession abilities are retained with the obvious exceptions of those abilities defined by alignment. (There is no such thing as a Vampire-Paladin.)

A “lesser” vampire’s physical strength is tied to its negative plane existence, so a “lesser” vampire does have a physical strength of 18/76. However, alignment and intelligence are open to some interpretation.

If the figure in life is stupid and foolish and his/her alignment is neutral, lawful or good, the transition to becoming a Vampire should not automatically change his/her intelligence or alignment. Obviously a Vampire is evil, and that change is automatic. But a “lesser” vampire can view evil from a lawful or neutral posture, at least initially. Eventually he/she will become chaotic, but this could take a period of time. I allow the monster a saving throw taken weekly to see if the alignment change occurs.

Intelligence/Wisdom is another matter. If, in life, the figure is Smart or Wise, then the resultant “lesser” vampire can have “exceptional” intelligence of 15–16. If the figure is not too bright then the resultant vampire should not be too bright either. The Vampire can acquire “cunning,” but that should be worth no more than 2–8 points of Intelligence or Wisdom.

I raise the subject of intelligence because if Vampires used all of their

intelligence and were lawful too, they likely would rule entire sections of the planet, if not the entire planet! Played intelligently, a Vampire would 1) accumulate at least two coffins; 2) create a few “lessers” to “guard the fort,” 3) use their charming powers to gain minions; 4) never fight until melee does produce Forced Gaseous Form; and 5) use summoned and charmed monsters to weaken opposition before the Full Vampire him/herself enters the battle, etc.

A Vampire can go on for many hours picking away at a party before a final outcome is assured, one way or the other. If a Vampire knows his/her coffin is threatened and it is his/her last one, he/she will become extremely clever. Yet before any Vampire makes a really clever defense, the DM should have him/her make a saving throw to reflect his/her chaotic nature. In this way, the party has a better chance.

Summoning and Charming

Finally, the Vampire can summon and charm. The Vampire must be limited in its summoning ability, or thousands of rats and hundreds of wolves will appear. I allow a Vampire only three summons each night and there must be at least a full hour between each. I contend that this summons s of the magical Monster Summoning type and thus the argument about how many wolves, bats and rats are in the area is not germane. If the wolves, bats and rats are available and within 2–12 melee rounds, then they will come, of course.

What are the statistics of these summoned monsters?

BATS: 90% of the time they should be the mundane sort that “hang around” in caves, bell towers, etc. They have 1–4 hit points, are Armor Class 7 (due to size and speed), move 12” (but usually flurry about figures when a Vampire summons them), do “inadvertent” damage of 1 point 50% of the time — if and only if at least 5 are swarming around a single figure and the Armor Class of the victim indicates a hit. Swarms reduce the ability “to hit” by 3 points. 10% of the time, however, 1 Vampire Bat per 10 bats (round down) may appear. It is 1 hit die A.C. 8, moves slower, 9”, and does 1 point of damage per hit. In addition, if it does it drains 1–4 points of blood just as a Stirge does but then flies away after 8 points are drained.

RATS: 90% of the time they should be the mundane sort that scurries about in dungeons, though they will always be especially large rats. 1–4 hit points, A.C. 8, bite causes 1 point of damage (no change of disease). But 10% of the time (and only in especially deep dungeons) Giant Sumatran Rats will appear, as per the *Monster Manual*. The quantity of these Giant Rats is 7–70 and not 10–100.

WOLVES: Their type should be a function of the climate. If in polar regions, Winter Wolves should appear, but only 2–7 would come. In other areas the chance of the normal wolf is 70% for the full 3–18 in number (see the *Monster Manual*); however, 30% of the time 2-14 (1d6 + 1d8) Dire Wolves will appear.

Lastly, we come to the Charm ability of a Vampire. When is a “glance met?” Can it be avoided? I use 1d20 for the figure Meleeing the Vampire and 1d12 for the Vampire (the case in which a Vampire meets someone casually can easily be adjudicated). If the 12-sided die equals or exceeds the roll on the 20-sided die the glance has been met. If the Vampire is surprised use 1d6; if the victim is surprised use 1d8 for him/her also. The victim, in melee, can purposefully avoid the glance by not facing the monster directly. Thus the Vampire will use 1d8 versus the player’s 1d20 but the player is then –2 to hit the vampire and his/her own Armor Class is 2 levels lower. The player can’t hit his/her opponent as easily, and since his/her own anticipation when attacked in melee is inhibited by not facing the monster, his/her Armor Class suffers.

When the Vampire does Charm, the victim immediately ceases hostility — no verbal command need be given. This Charm is far more powerful than a Charm Person spell, but obvious self-destruction will not be allowed. The charm is so powerful that the victim will fight his friends (at –2 to hit due to his/her zombie-like condition) and even allow him/herself to be drained of levels by the characteristic Vampire bite.

Hopefully, I haven’t missed too much, but every DM knows how “inventive” players can be. A little common sense, regardless of what the textbooks omit or gloss over, is fully the prerogative of the Dungeonmaster.

Observer's Report

ORIGINS: Chaos with a Happy Ending

This OBSERVER'S REPORT is written by the same person that does FANTASYSMITH'S NOTEBOOK. He prefers to do both under the pseudonym FANTASYSMITH, for reasons that he has made clear to us, and which we will honor.

Fluid sugar draws bees, fluid filth draws flies, and fluid situations attract the chaotic. This last was the case at ORIGINS '79.

Milling around the steaming exhibit hall, infesting the scruffy cafeteria, and wandering in search of the oddly located events were several lawful types. But these were outnumbered at least three to one by chaotics: jolly, sadistic dungeonmasters; irrational, incoherent well-wishers; and at least one chaotic that believes himself to be neutral.

Being chaotic is not necessarily bad, and the lack of absolute order at ORIGINS is not a criticism. Surprisingly, the ungainly operation galumphed along quite nicely and was extremely amiable.

It should be remembered that only a few short weeks before it became reality, ORIGINS '79 was without form, and was void. Penn Wargamers, along with Strategy and Fantasy World, actually pulled together what can be described as an effective chaos, and this is no mean accomplishment. Favorable response was warm, especially in the Schwartz Sports Center. Appreciation was so vocal that six individuals actually *thanked* S&FW representatives. These poor souls have yet to recover from that shock.

With all the roiling confusion, ORIGINS *did* have a basic structure. All vendors exhibited in a sweaty gymnasium called Schwartz. This place was extremely healthful — it was actually an immense sauna bath in disguise. Located 2½ miles from registration and all other activities of the convention, it was serviced by a brace of shuttling “deuce and a half” trucks whose cheery drivers did much to burnish the image of the U.S. Army Reserves.

Classes and symposia were hidden in the student union and the immediate vicinity, but there were no dungeonmasters to direct those who were adventurous enough to attend. Even though it was rumored that the timing of ORIGINS was a deterrent to attendance, an estimated 4,300 people were there, if you count campus cops and registered sneakthieves.

Since trying to make perfect sense of all that went on would be sheer nonsense, the rest of this report will describe individual events, sessions, and exhibits of ORIGINS.

Miniature Wargames: One of the greatest joys of a miniature freak must be to see entire armies of beautifully painted figures being used in combat play. Here is the full panoply of color and motion that every wargamer secretly wants to control. A beautifully landscaped Gettysburg was notable in the hotbox area, but the most active miniatures conflicts took place just to the left of ORIGIN'S registration desks. Those who grump about historical and geographic impossibilities had a field day while observing the Han Chinese locked in mortal combat with the Egyptian Pharaoh's warriors.

The way that tournament winners were picked was an excellent piece of chaotic thinking. Players were given points based on this formula: (winner's points minus loser's points) squared.

By squaring the difference, the tournament judges assured that the lucky player who got a boob as an opponent in the first round would always look better than the competitor who just barely won a tight fight. Future judges might do well to observe the excellent elimination rules practiced by all professional sports leagues, and might like to consider several “wild card” possibilities so that chaotic luck could run for the contestants as well as against them.

Board Games: The board gamers knew that the convention existed solely for them. They filled the cafeteria, jammed the snack bar, and overflowed into all available nooks and crannies. Play continued into the wee hours in dorms and under unoccupied street lights.

At two in the morning your humble author, searching euphorically for a place to sleep, had to step over four plentipotentiaries dozing over a *Diplomacy* game (about 1916, by the look of it) and avoid three

slumbering space cadets who had shortly before been striving to define *Freedom in the Galaxy*.

If the assembled throng of gamers at ORIGINS represents the hobby, there will be continued excitement for some time to come. These gamers took to the brouhaha like seasoned barbarians, filled oxcarts with the games they had bought, and generally added considerably to the chaos. No one needs to try to recreate the “fog of war” at a convention like ORIGINS. The boardgamers will do the fogging quite nicely all by themselves.

Miniature Painting: Joe Miceli, one of the deans of miniature-painting professionals, gave a workshop to all who could jam into his classroom. He so inspired his pupils that several of them took to the snack room with their paint pots and proceeded to turn out blue giants and pea-green trolls. Joe later pulled off an amazing coup by winning four prizes in the amateur figure painting competition. Anyone who observed Joe's handiwork at the Dragontooth or Courier booths will have to admit that any further classes or workshops he gives will continue to help the hobby.

Painters who don't want to be bothered with mixing colors will be happy with the line of colors that *Armory* displayed. They are bright, intense, and fit the needs of anyone who enjoys the seminude style of Frazetta-inspired miniatures. The particular shade that caused most comment was “Nipple Pink.” One wag suggested that its name should be changed to “Nipple Pink (Caucasian)” since it couldn't possibly be used on figures representing other persuasions.

Although estimates vary, one can be confident that a single bottle of this shade will suffice to paint the applicable anatomy of roughly 5,000 25mm miniatures. That may not sound like a lot to some, but it's 10,000 nipples to the rest of us.

A bit further away in the fetid air of Schwartz, “Uncle” Duke Seifert of *Heritage* was assuring one and all that *his* paints could allow *anyone* to paint a 25mm figure in five minutes. He backed up his claim by demonstration right before our very eyes. We could see how well he had done: “No, no!” he would advise. “Hold them 16 to 18 inches from your eyes. Still not satisfied? Well, Squint!”

Figure Vendors: A convention is the best place to see figures and make your purchase choices. Stores are normally out of stock of all the best pieces. The manufacturers' catalogs never have pictures of more than a small fraction of their offerings, and often do not have good descriptions, either.

All the major figure houses were there: *Heritage*, *Minifigs*, *Ral Partha*, *Archive*. Also present with beautiful displays were half a dozen artists vending their own wares. These smaller firms specialize in producing really fine pieces — many of which could be just right for a special character for D&D or a diorama.

It was pleasant to see that *Dragontooth's* 25mm figure lines are now approaching 90mm. This slight difference in scale could cause difficulties for carpers, but it sure holds great opportunities for the miniature sculptor who envies the Statue of Liberty.

Barry Minot was there, sweating with a British accent. His figures are given far too little publicity in the U.S.; many of them are ideal for D&D, and most are beautifully done.

Steve Johannson's work was surprisingly good. Of special interest were his Samurai. His series of 15mm guerilla war figures are the only ones on the market to portray the “brushfire” wars that are so wildly unpredictable and so present in today's headlines.

Speaking of 15mm, *Martian Metals'* “Fantasy 15s” series is excellent for use as gnomes and other small characters. Before I had actually seen these tiny figures well painted, I didn't believe it could be done.

Martian Metals also has some of the finest dragons in any company's line. These terrors are as valid for 25mm gaming as they are for 15mm. They will simply represent smaller dragons in the larger scale.

The Professionals: To anyone continuously interested in, this
(*cont. on page 22*)

S2**SPECIAL MODULE**

ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONSTM



Dungeon Module S2 White Plume Mountain

by Lawrence Schick

This module contains background information, referee's notes, player aids, a complete map level, and a cutaway view of the mountain complex. WHITE PLUME MOUNTAIN is from the Special ("S") series; like others in this series, it is meant to stand on its own and is a complete ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS adventure. The recommended number of players is four to ten, with levels ranging from fifth to tenth.

If you find this module interesting and challenging, look for the TSR logo on future publications from The Game Wizards!

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New Setting for the Adventure

Gary Gygax

So many things inspire ideas regarding D&D and/or AD&D that despite my previous misgivings about taking on a column which would require not less than eight articles per year, I find it difficult not to write three times that number.

In case some readers wonder why such an output isn't desirable, allow me a few paragraphs to explain the relationship between TSR Periodicals and TSR Hobbies, as well as between the Publisher of *The Dragon* (myself) and the Editor (Tim Kask).

TSR Periodicals is a subsidiary of TSR Hobbies, and as such the only ties it has with the parent firm are those of overall direction from the chief executive of TSR (who passes along the policy set forth by the corporation's board of directors) and financial responsibility. The directives must be followed, and Periodicals must handle its finances properly. That is about all there is to it.

Similarly, the Publisher of *The Dragon* has no direct input or concern with the day-to-day operations of the magazine. Policy matters, finances, and direction are the principal concerns of the Publisher. The Editor is responsible for form, content, circulation, and so forth. The reason I am Publisher is because I am also the chief executive of TSR Hobbies at this time, so the titles are actually synonymous. Barring a change in the corporate structure of TSR, whoever is the next President of the firm will also become the new Publisher of *The Dragon*.

The Publisher does not tell the Editor what the specific content of a magazine should be — although the general thrust or aim of the publication is within the Publisher's realm. When a new issue of the magazine comes in from the printer, I am at least as unaware of its contents as the other employees of TSR Hobbies. I am not even certain which, if any, articles written by me will appear in any given issue, in most cases.

Because the Publisher should not interfere with the role of the Editor, I make an effort to avoid doing so. With rare exceptions, whatever I submit to *The Dragon* is given to Tim as material from a contributor. As Editor, he can run a piece when and where he chooses, with whatever alteration he sees fit — at least in theory.

The roles of Publisher and Editor cannot be entirely ignored, of course. Therefore, my submissions tend to receive a bit more attention. If I supply *The Dragon* with three or four articles during a month, it could put undue unspoken pressure upon the Editor to use them all. Returning to what was said at the beginning of this column, I make an effort to

keep my output to a reasonable level in the number of articles and their length.

* * * * *

Now, on to important matters — your D&D or AD&D campaign!

It is always inspiring for me to read *The Dragon*, and TD26 was especially so. Leaving praise (or complaint) about an issue in general to the general readership, I'll say that Kevin Hendryx is doing a fine job of authorship! His "Mugger" piece, while a very funny satire, is also a social commentary on our cities. It is worth reading for its humor.

"Mugger" has another use as well. The DM who has been running a campaign for an extended period must read it for pure inspiration. The DMG has a special section devoted to keeping the campaign fresh by using such games as *Gamma World* and *Boot Hill* as special scenarios to maintain challenge in the game. Special settings for the campaign can be in the Ancient period, with its sheer masses of men and unfamiliar beasts (such as camels and elephants) plus some possible differences in the working of magic (if it works at all); the early gunpowder era; Napoleonic times; WWI, WWII; or the imagined future.

"Mugger" points out that there is also a battleground out on the dark metropolitan streets. If the criminals are combined with the police, the challenge to the safety of a group of hapless adventurers thrown into such a setting would be interesting indeed — especially when the danger of speeding traffic, high-voltage wires, machinery, and the rest of modern technology we take for granted is considered.

With these thoughts in mind, I have prepared a special scenario which will put the adventurers through a short "routine" adventure in a "World of Greyhawk" city. This will lead them to a cellar and a tunnel which in turn brings them to a sewer and up to a subway tunnel. The power which brings the party to this place will probably cause a blackout in the city, so for a time the players will be uncertain where they are. If it all works as well as I think it will, the report of the game will be submitted for publication in a future issue.

In the city setting, magic will work, although cleric spells above third level will not. Of course, firearms also work. The perils of the place — police, street gangs, muggers, criminals of other sorts, citizens with karate training or able to box, those with guard dogs, etc. — will be numerous and different. Weapons aren't difficult to rate according to damage. Electricity will be interesting — low-tension AC giving but 1d6 damage (4d6 if the party is well grounded), low-tension DC doing 1d6 each segment until the victim is freed, and high-tension DC doing 1d20 in the same manner. Cars will inflict 1d4 damage for each 10 mph of speed. Small trucks will get a d6, large ones a d8, and trains a d10 for each 10 mph.

Each special character (guard, policeman, street tough, mugger, etc.) will be given a level roughly corresponding to those of AD&D characters, although the type of dice used will be non-standard. If the adventurers survive and manage to return to their own place in the multiverse, they will have little in the way of treasure — at least in all probability.

Gunpowder and explosives will not function on the World of Greyhawk. Lighters and flashlights must be garnered. Perhaps things such as aluminum arrows, metal bottles (canteens) and plastic containers might prove useful. There will be a jewelry store or two, and an art gallery, but trying to loot them will certainly bring police and possibly a SWAT team.

What should prove the real fun of this whole scenario is discovering the perils of the modern world as DM and seeing how the players handle them in their roles as fantasy world adventurers. If you have DMed or played settings of this type, by all means tell me about the experience, so I can pass it along to the other readers!

* * * * *

As a caution, I must point out that the Schick-Moldvay series "Giants In The Earth" tends to rate the figures too high, making them more like gods than "heroes." Cugel is okay (although his wisdom rating is too high for my taste), but Kane is *too* powerful! A 30th-level Fighter/20-level Magic User/14th-level assassin? Come on, fellows! Would you believe a 20th-level Fighter/16th-level Magic User/12th-

(cont. on page 22)



THE NEW, 江戸見の忍術 NINJA!

Sheldon Price

These rule extensions for the ninja are based on the book, *NINJA: The Invisible Assassins*, by Andrew Adams, published in 1970 by O'Hara Publications, Inc., Los Angeles, Calif. The rule extensions involve four areas in the ninja skills: weaponry, tools, equipment, and poisons.

Weaponry: The ninja's bow is called the hankyu. The bow is very light with a rapid rate of fire. The encumbrance weight of the hankyu, including up to 40 arrows, should be taken as 20. In the hands of a ninja skilled in its use (a ninja who has chosen this weapon), it fires at twice the rate of a short bow.

The ninja use calthrops which are called tetsu-bishi. The tetsu-bishi came in several types: all formed metal, bent nails, plants, and a mix of other forms. Long nails may be inserted into plant matter to form what looks like a potato with nails in it. About a dozen nails are used in each one. This form takes nil time to make and costs about a silver piece for the nails to use in one. Plants can be found that look like natural calthrops. These have nil cost. There is a 5% chance for each day spent searching that 1-6 of these may be found. The probability is not cumulative. These cause damage the same as regular formed all-metal tetsu-bishi.

Metal claws may be attached to fingers and toes. These sharp claws may cause serious injury on penetrating the skin. They may be poisoned. They cost 2 silver pieces and it takes one week to make a complete set for hands and toes.

Female ninja, called kunoichi, often use a long metal hairpin which they conceal in their elaborate hairdos. These pins are usually used by stealth when the kunoichi is very close to her target. They are often used while the kunoichi is in bed next to her target while her target sleeps. They have a nil cost.

A special type of spear called the bisento is often used. The bisento is not a pure ninja invention; other warriors do use it. It is most like a spear with a scimitar attached to the tip. Unlike a normal spear, it may both thrust and cut. The cost of the bisento is 12 gold pieces.

The ninja also used variations of staff weapons.

The shikomi-zue is basically a sword staff. It is a staff with a concealed sword blade that may be quickly extended. The cost of the shikomi-zue is 5 pieces of silver plus 1 week to assemble it after the staff and a short sword are acquired.

Staves also had small missiles attached to one end. These missiles may be pellets or darts. They could be sent at an enemy by flicking the staff.

Ninja also use a device called a poison water gun. The main use of this weapon is to blind enemies. It consists of a hollow wooden bamboo tube about 1½ feet long. The tube is open at one end and has a tiny hole at the other end. A small piece of cloth may be used to close it. A wooden plunger small enough to fit into the open end is used. A cloth is wrapped around it to make a tight fit. When the weapon is used the plunger is forced into the tube, causing a spray of water to shoot out of the hole. The weapon has a maximum effective range of 60 feet. The spray is in the shape of a triangle 60 feet high and 10 feet across at the base. The ammunition used is powdered iron and dye suspended in water. A skin-contact poison may be used, but then the weapon user is in extreme danger. The main effect is to blind eyes. Allow a saving throw versus poison to see if this happens. It takes 1-12 melee rounds to clear the eyes. The cost of this weapon is 5 silver pieces and 4 days.

A cannon may also be used. The cannon is a hollow wooden tube of about 8 inches outside diameter and 6 inches inside diameter. The tube is about 30 inches long. It fires a spherical metal projectile about 60 feet in a low, flat trajectory. It may hit more than one target when fired. The ninja could fire it while holding it in his hands standing up. The tube may

3) May be chosen at level 6:

The ninja could also make a sleep-inducing poison. These poisons have levels and accumulate as a paralyze poison at half strength. The poison causes sleep for 1-12 turns. This poison comes in two forms each of which is a separate draw:

- (a.) Same physical form as standard ninja poison;
- (b.) A form which takes effect when burned.

4) May be chosen at level 8:

The ninja could make a delayed poison that could cause temporary insanity. The poison is administered in food. The poison takes effect a few hours after being administered. It does not have levels and does not accumulate in the victim.

5) All of the above poisons have no effect if the save is made.

6) Healing skills:

The ninja must be able to treat and heal himself because he is not always able to risk seeing a doctor. Normal sprains and bruises can always be treated by a ninja. The ninja is able, as his cure-poison draw at any level, to draw a healing skill. There are two types of healing skills:

(a.) He is able to learn how to treat any one disease for the draw. The treatment will cost 10 pieces in gold for each disease healed. This may be done once a day for each time the disease is selected. Any disease may be selected.

(b.) He gains the ability to heal 2 points of injury a day. This does not include injury caused by poisons. This ability is not the same as a heal spell. Note is kept of normal healing with injury healed by this method healing first. For every 5 points of injury healed by this method, there is a penalty of 1 on attack and defense until it has healed normally. Also, this method will not help a character who has less than 50% damage when this method is used. Two points of healing are gained each time this is drawn. The healing may be split up in any fashion desired. There is a cost for medical supplies of 1 gold piece for each point healed. Supplies are bought before they are needed.

Healing skills may be drawn as the cure-poison draw at any level. These skills do not, however, count toward the distribution requirements on poison types.

Ninja Gear

Weapons	Tools	Equipment	Poisons
1. <i>Bo staff</i>	1. <i>Tsuba</i>	1. <i>Saya</i>	1. <i>Instant kill</i>
2. <i>Ninja-to</i>	2. <i>Osaku</i>	2. <i>Shinobi koi</i>	2. <i>Slow kill</i>
3. <i>Sageo</i>	3. <i>Tsuba-giri</i>	3. <i>Shinobi kumade</i>	3. <i>Delayed kill</i>
4. <i>Nage teppo</i>	4. <i>Shikoro</i>	4. <i>Nekade</i>	4. <i>Instant paralyze</i>
5. <i>Sode tsutsu</i>	5. <i>Kunai</i>	5. <i>Mizuzutsu</i>	5. <i>Slow paralyze</i>
6. <i>Kakae ozutsu</i>	6. <i>Tatami nomi</i>	6. <i>Musubinawa</i>	6. <i>Delayed paralyze</i>
7. <i>Uzume-bi</i>	7. <i>Escape</i>	7. <i>Neru-kawa ito</i>	7. <i>Gyokuro</i>
8. <i>Hankyu</i>	8. <i>Tekagi</i>	8. <i>Kama ikada</i>	8. <i>Dung & blood</i>
9. <i>Metsubishi</i>	9. <i>Silent sandal</i>	9. <i>Mizugumo</i>	9. <i>Itching powder</i>
10. <i>Tetsubishi</i>	10. <i>Traction sandal</i>	10. <i>Ukigusa</i>	10. <i>Laugh inducing</i>
11. <i>Kusarigama</i>	11. <i>Armor</i>	11. <i>Tablets</i>	11. <i>Sleep: standard</i>
12. <i>Kyoketsu shoge</i>	12. <i>Satten-jitsu</i>	12. <i>Mizu-taimatsu</i>	12. <i>Sleep: burning</i>
13. <i>Shinobi zue</i>	13. <i>Sacchi-jitsu</i>	13. <i>Tanagokoro</i>	13. <i>Temporary insanity</i>
14. <i>Fukumi-bari</i>	14. <i>Satsun-jitsu</i>	14. <i>Ninsokudai</i>	14. <i>Healing</i>
15. <i>Dart shuriken</i>		15. <i>Ukidaru</i>	
16. <i>Star shuriken</i>		16. <i>Kyobako-fune</i>	
17. <i>Whistler shuriken</i>		17. <i>Mizukaki</i>	
18. <i>Claws</i>		18. <i>Ice sandals</i>	
19. <i>Hairpins</i>		19. <i>Jumping</i>	
20. <i>Bisento</i>		20. <i>Forgery</i>	
21. <i>Shikomi-zue</i>			
22. <i>Dart staff</i>			
23. <i>Poison water gun</i>			
24. <i>Cannon</i>			
25. <i>Kuji-kiri</i>			

Note: Items in *italic* type are unchanged from their descriptions as listed in TD16. Items in regular type are altered from the form in which they appeared in TD16, or are new items fully described in the accompanying story.



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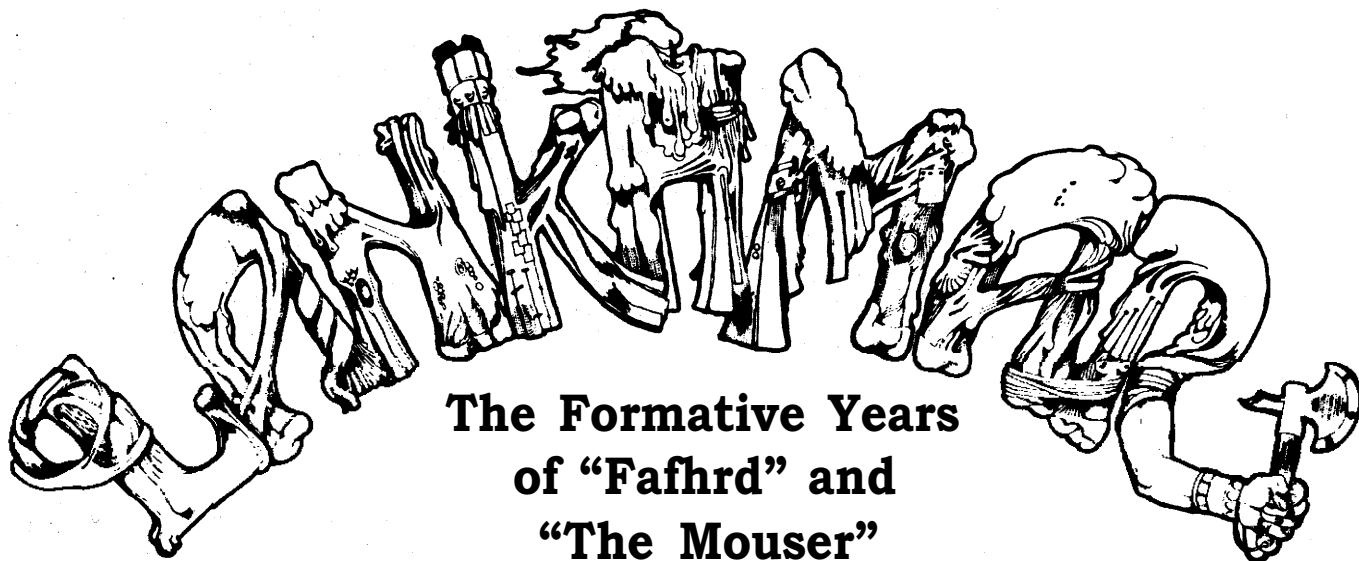
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Tell them you saw it in The Dragon



The Formative Years of "Fafhrd" and "The Mouser"

F. C. MacKnight is a Ph.D. Professor Emeritus from the State University of New York and happens to have had the rare privilege of having been friends with Fritz Leiber and Harry Fischer for many many years. The three of them go back together to before the first prototype of Lankhmar. The author is in the enviable position of having been around for the birth of the entire Nehwon cycle, and so can offer some rare insights. This is the first of two parts. The second part will appear in an upcoming DRAGON. —ED.

Dr. Franklin C. MacKnight

I am one of the few people ever to have played the original game of *Lankhmar* other than its original authors, Harry Fischer, Fritz Leiber and Martha Fischer. There was also Prof. Lawrence (Larry) Howe of the University of Louisville, and that is all. Harry owned the board and hadn't had many game-minded friends since college days.

It wasn't the casual sort of contest that one could dash off like a game of backgammon or even chess. *Lankhmar* couldn't be finished in a few hours. It was difficult to finish it in a few days! At least a weekend was needed unless one played an abbreviated version involving only two cities and two players (or two partnerships). I played the game only three or four times but that was enough to convince me that it was the greatest, most fascinating game ever invented by man. And, unlike chess, that noblest of board games which had an evolution over centuries, *Lankhmar* sprang directly from the minds of Harry and Fritz, aided by a map of *Lankhmar* done by Martha. Now *Lankhmar* has undergone a mutation to adapt it to the habits of wargame players and to become commercially viable.

Lankhmar wasn't just a game, it was an adventure. The pieces were not mere abstractions, but heroes with personalities with which one identified. It provided an esthetic thrill unequaled in my experience in any other game anywhere.

What I wish to do in this article is to explain how the game was originally played and how the new board can be adapted to the original game if one wishes.

I feel that I have a duty in this. Though I am not one of the game's authors, I am indirectly responsible for it. The game came about as a development of the *Lankhmar* Mythos in its early pre-publication days. And I am also indirectly responsible for the Mythos itself. If Fritz Leiber and Harry Fischer are the "parents" of Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser, the people without whom the pair would never have been invented, I might be considered a "grandparent" since I am responsible for the meeting of Fritz Leiber and Harry Fischer. Without me there would have been no Fafhrd, no Grey Mouser, no *Lankhmar*. I am the "mutual friend" mentioned by Moskowitz in his chapter on Leiber in *Seekers of Tomorrow* (p. 216), who introduced them. But for me they would never have met (or, there is no reason to believe they would have).

So, as a prelude to the description of the *Lankhmar* game it might be of interest to tell how this came about.

* * *

When Harry Otto Fischer entered Louisville Male High School as a freshman, he was known to everyone because he was so spectacularly small. A year accelerated in school, he was far below normal stature even for his age group. He would sit on the laps of football players on the streetcar and became the center of attention—a curiosity because of his size and personality. Harry not only looked like Edgar Bergen's Charlie McCarthy but had a similarly extroverted temperament and wit. The famous puppet could have been copied from him!

Harry never felt any disadvantage or had any feelings of inferiority because of his size. Quite the contrary, he was proud of being small because it got him attention. He never got over this feeling of superiority even though eventually as an adult he attained the not-unusual height of 5' 2".

Harry was in the class of 1927 but ahead of the class in some subjects. I was in the class of 1926½ and our paths never crossed until we met in English 6 and 7 where we spent a year under the tutelage of Mr. H. B. Calpha. I was as recessive socially as Harry was aggressive, but we had a mutual friend through whom Harry learned I had a fine collection of *Weird Tales* and Edgar Rice Burroughs books, so Harry took it upon himself to cultivate me in the hope of being able to borrow books. He didn't succeed in this since I was reared in the tradition of "Neither a borrower nor a lender be." In spite of this barrier, by the end of the school year we had become as thick as thieves, and spent the next summer in close contact. Though everyone knew Harry, and Harry knew everyone of any consequence, he had few close friends, and I became the principal of these. Our association persisted and strengthened throughout our senior year and two years of college at the University of Louisville.

Having grown nearly a foot since he entered high school, Harry was no longer a curiosity in college, though he may have been the shortest freshman. He lived an active social life with professors and fellow students; played bridge and chess at the student cafe. But there was also an inner coterie of Harry and me plus a few others who were particularly close.

Harry was an extremely imaginative person; he had ability in English and science but his weakness was mathematics. Like many of high intelligence and imagination he spent time in omnivorous reading that would normally be spent in study.

He got through two years at the University of Louisville and had made the tentative decision to become a botanist, but he dropped out quickly in his third year. It was the fall of 1929. I had quit the U. of Louisville and entered the University of Chicago. Perhaps it was the absence of my "steady" influence, but I think it would have happened anyway.

Many, if not most, people drop out of college not because of intellectual disability but because their creativity has been stifled too

long. They get tired of absorbing; they want to put it out instead of taking it in. They want to be physically and mentally active. Such it was with Harry (though the beginning of the depression was not a good time to make the decision to "go to work"!).

Whatever influence I had on Harry or he on me was probably limited to our cultural, literary, esthetic and philosophical environment. Through me he became acquainted with *Weird Tales*, M. R. James and science fiction. Through him I learned of Lord Dunsany, Arthur Machen and James Branch Cabell. And we both owed much to our mutual friend, the learned Bernard (Barney) Newburg (later my class valedictorian), who introduced us both to Sax Rohmer, Talbot Munday and others. Also influencing us with his literary knowledge was Benedict Johnstone, who worked at the Louisville Public Library and had an enormous knowledge of its resources. He helped us both get jobs there when we were seniors in high school. There is nothing like stack-browsing to broaden one's horizons!

* * *

And now to Fritz. We met at the University of Chicago when I entered there in 1929. He then often signed himself Fritz Richmond Leiber to avoid being Fritz Leiber Jr. (He had been given no middle name.) "Henry Richmond" was his alias used in billing in Fritz Leiber Sr.'s Shakespearean performances. Fritz could play adult parts at an early age because of his above-average height and had joined the touring company during summers.

It would seem that Fritz and I were destined to meet. Look at this set of coincidences:

We were both Psychology majors.

The normal load at Chicago was three courses per quarter. We were together in two of our three, Calculus II and pre-med Physiology. (Physiology was a requisite for psych majors, but I think he and I were the only ones to be taking calculus.)

We both entered the chess tournament and were both chosen to play on the University team.

Most improbable of all was that somehow we had been assigned adjacent seats at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra concerts; particularly improbable since he had ordered his tickets in Chicago and I by mail from Louisville.

Despite all this going for our acquaintance, it took five or six weeks and two symphony concerts before we ever got on speaking terms. We were both that socially reticent. Then it happened in a hurry. It was the first chess match, and at the celebration thereafter at the team captain's apartment, general conversation somehow revealed that he and I seemed to have read the same things of a non-academic nature, particularly Sax Rohmer and science fiction. After this meeting of minds, Fritz and I became fast friends and intimates. Fritz, it seemed, had never met anyone who had similar tastes: He had lived in a sort of intellectual vacuum.

It was during Spring Vacation time (March 1930) that Harry, who had just quit the academic grind, came to Chicago to visit me. Knowing from my description of Harry that here was another person of his own intellectual tastes, Fritz had none of his usual reserve, and he and Harry hit it off immediately. During that visit of about a week, I think Harry saw as much of Fritz as of me. After he returned to Louisville his correspondence with Fritz started. Fritz accepted Harry because he was a kindred spirit, and he reacted favorably to Harry's outgoing charm. Harry was attracted to Fritz's intellectual stature, his personal charm, the glamor of his theatrical experience, and, not least, his height of 6' 4".

It was that last aspect that started the Mythos. Fafhrd and the Mouser were the apotheosis of the big man and the small man in team.

The Grey Mouser represented Harry, idealizing himself, but not too much. Harry was not only mentally like the Mouser, but was physically wiry, quick, and strong (far stronger than I), though he excelled in no particular sport. Fencing he learned from me after my first year at the U. of Chicago, but he never competed. With time and practice I think he could have been as good a swordsman as the Mouser himself!

Fafhrd was the idealization of the big man, with Fritz as a physical model: strong, wily, brave, Nordic or Norse, with all the fighting ability of

the epic hero. That wasn't the real Fritz by a long shot; his strong points at that phase of his life were in the mental rather than the physical sphere. Fritz was of gigantic intelligence, and when I first met him in his sophomore year at college, he had a perfect academic record. He continued close to perfect throughout his college career and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa in his junior year.

Temperamentally, he was a far cry from the roistering and belligerent Fafhrd. I think Fritz's introversion and socially reticent attitude may have been a reaction to the overpowering extroversion of both his father and mother. But as a trained actor, Fritz could disguise his normal reserve successfully when the occasion demanded.

I think Harry had an important effect on Fritz in that he nearly forced him to become a writer by answering Harry's formidably long letters, responding fiction with fiction, fantasy with fantasy, and character sketch with character sketch in their correspondence. Fritz's identification with Fafhrd may have had some personal effect in modifying his self-image to a slight extent. And I think the Lankhmar epic may be Fritz's greatest claim to permanent literary fame, though by no means the only. Some may say that his masterpieces are non-Lankhmar works (e.g. *Conjure Wife*). Probably Fritz's literary style itself owes much to Harry's influence.

My own influence on Fritz is indirect and is mainly that but for me he wouldn't have known Harry, who may have been the most important influence in his life. But there are two other indirect influences.

I introduced Fritz to Lovecraft and *Weird Tales*. In the early '30s there were no Lovecraft fans outside the readership of *Weird Tales*.

And I was instrumental in Fritz's knowledge of fencing. When I met him he was a tennis enthusiast and had spent his physical-education credits at Chicago in that sport. He was, I believe, very competent but not expert or "varsity" caliber. My enthusiasm for fencing caused him to switch his last two P.E. credits to that noble sport. Like me, he also became a student of fencing lore, history and theoretical tactics. Like many large men, he was temperamentally a defensive fighter, and as in many other sports the attacker has the advantage in fencing. Nevertheless, Fritz did win a few medals in league competition and probably ranks higher as a fencer than as a tennis player. As a writer of swordplay, Leiber is the most competent I know of because of his personal experience and historical study.

* * *

The background of Lankhmar locale is, I think, rooted in the northern European epics, the works of Robert F. Howard and Lord Dunsany, plus the general effect of the various Edgar Rice Burroughs sagas. It is of interest that the name was originally spelled Lankmar by Harry and is so spelled on the early maps by Martha. On one of these sent to Fritz, the "h" in *Lankmar* was constructed with a fancy slant making it look much like an "n". This confusion may have caused Fritz in his first story to spell the name with an additional "n" and a misplaced "h". (Fritz says the change of spelling was not deliberate.)

The original mythos also contained other subsidiary characters (Pulgh and Movarl are now immortalized in the published game), most important of whom were the mysterious magicians and semi-deities Ningauble and Sheelba, who figured more prominently in Harry's conception than in the early stories by Fritz. Ningauble was (originally, at least) pronounced NING-ga-BULL, with accents primarily on the first syllable and secondarily on the last. If the spelling "Ningauble" doesn't properly reflect this, I understand it is Harry's fault: He, not Fritz, originated that spelling. It looks as if it should be pronounced Nin-GAW-ble.

Early in the days of the saga I asked Harry, "If you are Mouser and Fritz is Fafhrd, how do I fit in?"

"You are Ningauble," he replied, probably just to satisfy me! (He might have said, "What makes you think you should be in it?") I always assumed that Sheelba represented Martha, but I don't recall any statement to that effect. It was quite a shock to Harry and me to find that Fritz had made Sheelba's gender masculine when she-he (or it) eventually entered the written record (*Sword of Lankhmar*). Fritz had always attributed masculinity to "*Sheelba of the Eyeless Face*" and was surprised to learn otherwise after the book was printed!

Design Forum

BOOT HILL? SURE! BUT WHAT SCALE?

Ralph Wagner

The introduction to the original BOOT HILL states, "Figures used should be about 25mm or 30mm scale." But my friends and I play in 54mm since I got an old Louis Marx & Co. western town from the '50s. If you're not lucky enough to find a town, can you still have a good game in 54mm? And what about other scales? To answer these questions and more, I would like to explore the advantages and disadvantages of playing BOOT HILL in any and all scales available.

Let's start with the smallest scale, HO, or 15-20 mm. Two companies make western figures of polyethylene in an HO scale. They are Airfix of England and Atlantic of Italy. Airfix figures have been available in the U.S. for years. They offer a fair range of figure sets, including cowboys, Indians, cavalry and wagon train. The wagon train is no longer sold in a box by itself, but is now included in a cavalry fort set. It is well worth the cost because of the women and citizens included in it. The main problem with the entire line is a lack of sharpness and detail in the faces. Also, I find the hand guns too large. Airfix has been changing its HO line to look like its 54mm counterparts, though as yet this has only been done with WWII figures. When this change-over takes place for the western figures, the 20mm gamer will have some very fine figures. On the basis of its other products, I feel that a false-front town and more western figures would be well within Airfix's ability.

Atlantic HO figures have recently become available in the U.S., and if I were Airfix I would be worried, not only because of Atlantic's large western line, but because of its fine detail. Their western line includes what Airfix has, and more: miners, buffalo hunters, bad guys, sheriffs, etc. Let's look at the variety in one set, "Outlaws and Sheriffs." It includes: bank robber being shot, woman with rifle, man being dragged by a horse, man being hung, and a two-gun sheriff. This is much better than your standard bunch of cowboys with guns!

If I have any complaint with the Atlantic figures, it would be that some are too long, while others are suffering from severe pumpkin-headedness. The Indians (Sioux and Apache) have been hurt by poor research, so one must get a good history book and a sharp blade before going very far. If you play by not letting the figures into the buildings, then the Atlantic buildings are meant for you. I would just use the printed front of the building and build a new structure around it. Although at this time Atlantic does have an overwhelming edge in quality and quantity over Airfix, I would still include Airfix figures in my town, though I would try to improve on them.

I feel that in 20mm there is a very wide range of figures available. The only things missing are Mexicans and a stage set. Atlantic buildings can be used along with HO railroad buildings, but the latter are a bit too small. The overall problem with the scale is that everything is too tiny. 20mm is fine for large battles, but perhaps too small for 1 to 1. The furniture for barroom brawls has to be built by a clever germ.

McEwan Miniatures, Minifigs and Grenadier all make Wild West gaming figures. McEwan's range is small but interesting; a fat Mexican and a Clint Eastwood figure stand out. Comparing the western line to the other McEwan figures, it seems to be lacking detail, but they do offer extra weapons. Most of the figures also appear in mounted versions.

Minifigs makes a wider and more interesting line than McEwan. The figures are more detailed and finished. They offer, among others, a saloon girl, a sleeping Mexican, a lady, a cowboy being shot, and several different gunfighters.

Grenadier's "Western Gunfighter" line has the greatest variety of figures, some 50 of them. These are all pretty good, though the poses aren't very dynamic, and Grenadier has had some problems in the past with casting quality on these guys (it seems to have been cleared up). However, for the variety they offer, they are almost essential to a complete 25-30mm town.

One could have quite a few different western figures by mixing items from these companies together. Still lacking are a good bunch of Indians, rolling stock, cattle, and cavalry. Although one can always play

around these missing types, they can add a lot to a town. As for the town itself, only cardboard is available.

Elastolin makes wild west figures in two ranges, 70mm and 40mm, both of styrene. Now, 40mm would be the ideal scale to play 1 to 1 in, it seems to me; small enough for a big town, yet large enough to be seen. Although Elastolin makes some outstanding figures in other lines, the Wild West is not its long suit. Only a few figures are really passable, and there are not nearly enough to get the ball rolling.

Valiant makes the only metal 54mm figures worth buying for gaming, because the uniqueness of the cameo figures (Doc Holliday, Wild Bill Hickock and Wyatt Earp) makes them worth the price.

Three companies make 54mm western figures in polyethylene. They are Airfix, Britains, and Louis Marx & Co. The Airfix line is the same in content as the HO, excluding the wagon train, but that's where all the similarity stops. The 54mm figures are excellent in all respects: poses, detail and authenticity. The only thing that is poor is the horse-saddle-rider arrangement.

Britains has much to add in western figures. Each line has six mounted figures and six on foot. The lines are cowboys, cavalry, Apache and Plains Indians. The cowboys have just had six new hands added, and a stagecoach and covered wagon are further nice additions to the line. The basic problem is with the weapons; the handguns are too small, while the rifles are too big. However, for such few problems as the line affords, I feel Britains shouldn't be missed.

Louis Marx & Co., has been producing figures for many years. Almost all of us have seen a "Fort Apache" set. Marx puts out "Storage Box" sets which include cowboys and Indians, combined as well as separate. The cowboys have many poses and different types: mountain men, miners, bad guys and sheriffs, etc. Included in these sets are many accessories, such as a wagon, woodpile, watering troughs, extra weapons, steers, etc. These are the kinds of things that really make a fine western town. Cavalry and "Davy Crockett" types can still be found in the large fort sets.

As far as I'm concerned, the Marx figures are excellent (the miners are special stand-outs). As good as it is, the line is not without its problems. Some of the handguns are not too clear, two of the cowboys' arms are too long, the Indians have some small figures, and the two Mohawks are totally out of place. These are minor problems. It almost seems to me that Marx is trying to keep these very fine figures a secret. Most people regard them as toys, but I will stack the majority of them against anything else.

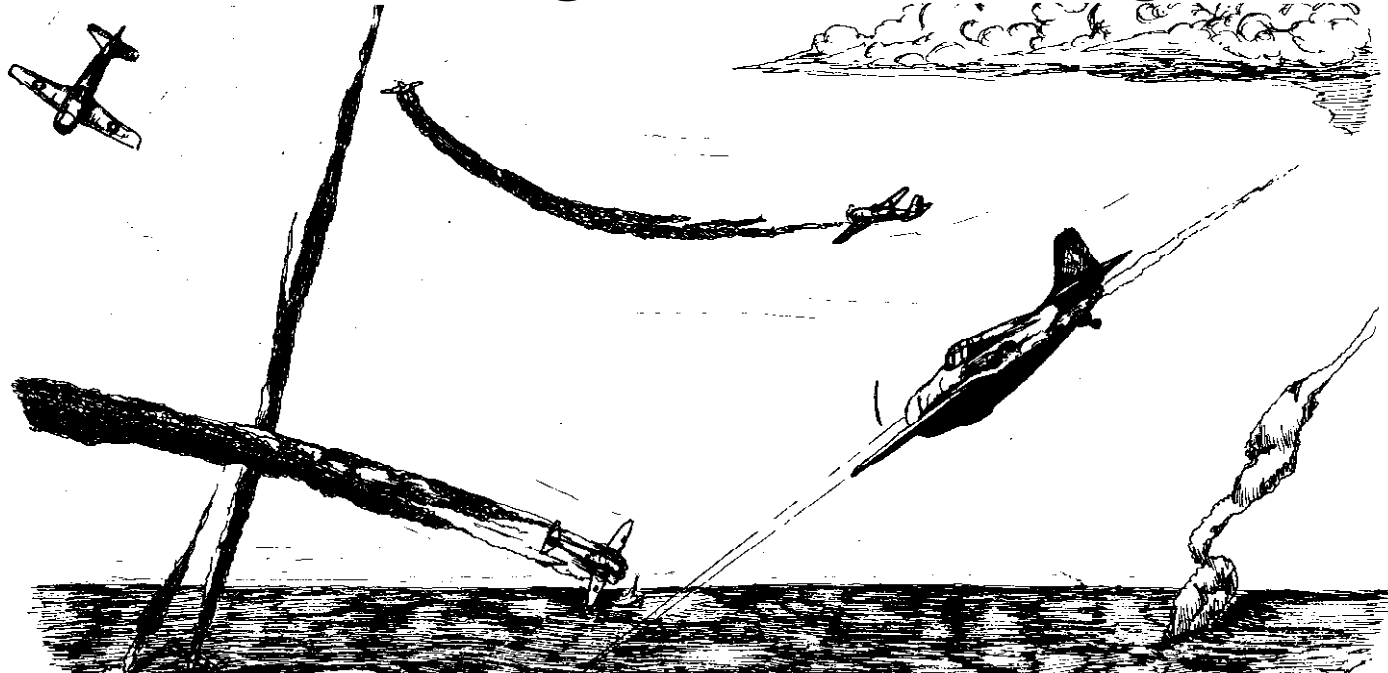
Airfix, Britains and Marx together provide a very wide range of figures. In 54mm, the major problem is space and a town. Britains does make one, but it seems far too juvenile, and the fine Marx towns are no longer commercially available. I would suggest making some buildings yourself. A town can be made using shoeboxes and balsa wood. Set the box on its side, and use the bottom for the front of the building. Cover the front with balsa wood. Victorian architecture was big, so the 1" to 1' cut balsa used for dollhouses can often be used here. As far as furniture goes, outside of the Marx accessories, some can still be found in the toy department, but most will have to be found at flea markets or Salvation Army toy bins. Once you do find it, it will have been worth the effort.

Any of these different scales can be used with the BOOT HILL role-playing system, with a little distance conversion to adjust for size. The distances in BOOT HILL assume the use of figures in the 25-30mm range. When using 15-20mm figures, cut all distances in half; for 40mm, multiply all distances by 1¾, and for 54mm, multiply everything 2½ times. These may not be exact, but they work. Of course, it's much easier to make all distance changes and note them before play, rather than trying to convert every distance in the middle of the game.

To come to any conclusion on which is "best," 20mm vs. 54mm, or metal vs. plastic, would be wrong. I wanted to explore as many scales as possible and plausible, so as to afford the gamer the most enjoyment possible. Remember two things: In one-to-one all that is needed are two figures, not two armies; and the true measure of any figure is what it looks like after the modeler is done, not what it looked like before.

Designer's notes

FLATTOP: A Long Game but a Strong Game



S. Craig Taylor, Jr.

The *FLATTOP* game covers the major air and sea battles in the Coral Sea–Solomons area during 1942. Although these battles have generated an extensive literature, and even a number of other war-games, aspects of this campaign have never before been tied together for a cohesive, in-depth study.

History records only five true carrier-to-carrier battles. Three of the five; Coral Sea, Eastern Solomons, and Santa Cruz (Midway and the Philippine Sea are the other two), took place in the geographic area and time frame covered in the game. Midway was the decisive *battle* of the Pacific War, but the events covered in *FLATTOP* were the decisive *campaign*. The airplane proved to be the decisive weapon in this campaign, and the weapons and tactics that would finally win the war saw their first developments in this campaign.

Organized navies have been around for thousands of years, and the strategies for using them were well-established in 1942. A markedly inferior fleet traditionally operated as a “fleet-in-being”, limited its offensive moves to raids, and avoided decisive combat that could lead to disaster. In fact, this is the exact strategy followed by the U.S. Navy in the early months of the war. The disregarding of this long-proven method of operations, and the eventually successful sustained offensive effort of the much weaker Allied fleets around Guadalcanal were only possible through an appreciation of the effects of airpower on naval strategy. The game simulates this unique campaign that saw the transition of naval thinking from battlelines of battleships to task forces of aircraft carriers.

As a design, *FLATTOP* presents the usual mixture of detail and playability compromise based on designer prejudice (What can I say?) and playtest response that can be found in any wargame. For example, ships come in only two speeds, one hex or two hexes per Turn. This can lead to some very unrealistic sustained speeds (although, in practice, this is not usually the case), but other systems tried proved to be more trouble than they were worth. Planes have only one given cruise speed and range, an obvious simplification, but attempts to have three or four cruise speeds and ranges per plane proved unworkable and confusing, so that only the most common was finally used. Rabaul, among others, is represented by one Base unit, when actually it was a network of airfields stretching across northern New Britain. Had all the individual landing strips been represented, the game would have required Operations Charts the size of a mapboard. Well over one hundred sources

were used for reference in the design, and the sheer amount of information accumulated led to problems in sorting it out, deciding what was important and should be used, and what was merely interesting. Some sources were in conflict, as in one scenario where there were five different orders of battle. Some false starts on the game mechanics were made, and hours had to be spent reviewing notes and drawing pages of graphs. Finally, everything sorted itself out, and the whole game system fell into place. The key to the system was finally realizing that, although every other phase could be simultaneous, the Plane Movement Phase would have to be sequential, with a random order of movement.

My most fervent hope and prayer is that I never again have to work on anything as large as *FLATTOP*. These things take so *long* to play. I found myself tied up in long playtest sessions two to four times a week for several months. Aside from being real time-eaters, the playtest sessions went smoothly, the game proving to be popular and curiously “addictive” to the playtesters. Along with some rules simplifications, the victory conditions are the major result of these playtests. Originally, it was planned to “spot” one side or the other some victory points to balance each scenario. That did not work in practice, as some players tended to “sit” on their spotted advantage. In the end the “fifty victory points or more” rule was found to work best, as it forces players to do something to attain such a lead, and leaves the true “balance” to the interaction of the players’ plans.

Playtesting complete, the rules had to be typed up. Battleline’s policy on rules is to take notes on all questions and problems that arise during playtesting, and to incorporate all of these notes somewhere in the rules. *FLATTOP* generated over two hundred notes of this type. The final draft of the rules took over a month to put together, as the Basic Game rules had to be re-written five times before everybody was happy. This was a perfect illustration of Murphy’s Eleventh Law, “Every clarification breeds new questions.” Writing rules is pain at best and *FLATTOP* was both a new and a complex game system, and so was very difficult to explain clearly. However, the rules drafting time was apparently well-spent, as, to date, *FLATTOP* has generated less rules questions than all but one other game in our whole line.

As the game’s designer and developer, my major disappointment is that it proved impossible to make the playing time shorter without sacrificing essential detail. On the other hand, over a year after publication, I still enjoy playing the darned thing, so something must have been done right!

UP ON A



Standardization vs. Playability

by Bob Bledsaw

My background in industrial design has made me well aware of the relative merits of standardization. My background in gaming has made me more respectful yet of the overworked word "playability" . . . usually found next to the copy on boxes stating "For 8 years and Up."

Standardization makes for ease of play . . . generally. However, there are many areas in fantasy campaign designing where standardization makes little or no contribution to playability. When a judge begins the designing of social structures for an active campaign, he is immediately faced with several problems resulting from rule systems which introduce standardization of fighting ability, intelligence, alignment, size, dexterity, and other concepts among the races of fantastic creatures with which he is attempting to populate his "fantasy" universe.

I have found it very expeditious (and more fun) to consider these limitations as representative of the particular creature type or race . . . in other words, the prevalent mode. This allows the judge to have unusually intelligent members of an otherwise low-intelligence type of fantastic creature to interact with player characters, lead organized lives of benefit to themselves, create organizations, formulate diabolically clever plans, and give a more realistic feel to negotiations and other actions so common in an active campaign.

I'm not suggesting that the judge should fit a normal curve to all characteristics ascribed to these creature types. Something far simpler suffices quite well . . . like permitting plus or minus one for forty percent, plus or minus two for twenty percent, and plus or minus three for five percent to the average characteristics for that type. A further refinement would be to create multi-modal adders to allow some simulation of racial characteristics, tribal influences, or environmental skewing of certain characteristics such as a history of contact with creatures of higher intelligence might introduce. Thus the players can be fairly certain that the "wandering monster" is the standard type to be expected and yet the system allows some interesting and unique encounters for those adventures structured in more depth by the judge.

Further applications of this approach would easily apply to technology, religion (mythos), and languages. Let's tackle the toughest one first, technology. My explanation for the difference in technology from one area in a fantastic campaign to another would run something like this: The rapid spread of technology throughout mankind's history is

peculiar to man himself and much abetted by the inherent ability of mankind to adjust to new situations or adapt to new environments.

In a world replete with more competitors for the highest rung on the predatory ladder, this ability is hampered by warfare (one of the best, if not the best, catalyst for technological advancement) with these other creatures instead of other men. Warfare with creatures of higher intelligence will cause more technological advancement, warfare with other men will create normal technological advancement, and warfare with creatures of lower intelligence will introduce stagnation and complacency.

Many of the creatures themselves (while a viable political force at this stage of mankind's technological development) may not possess the same environmental adaptability as mankind . . . i.e., a Stone Age technology might well be the prevalent technological level of most goblin tribes. Of course, this logic is predicated on the basis that there exist creatures almost as populous or more populous than mankind of high enough intelligence to represent a real political threat, while low enough in intelligence to inspire complacency . . . mankind is gradually winning the climb up the ladder.

The use of a working everyday magic system also retards "real" research to increase technology . . . although I would consider high technology items to be magical devices for all practical purposes in any fantasy campaign where knowledge of these devices is not commonplace.

The spread of technology through trade is also severely restricted, because trade itself is severely restricted to items of very high value and a highly portable nature. Anarchy prevails beyond the gates, and only the most stalwart of merchants will venture forth in the best of times. Warfare may bring out the animal cunning, but it wrecks the prospect of an adequate return on investment.

The limits of technological level attainable by any civilization, creature type, or sage individuals should be determined by the judge when he develops his campaign. Most opt to exclude the prospect of explosives, and I heartily concur that this seriously affects the "swords and sorcery" flavor preferred by most fantasy role-playing enthusiasts. The unique prospect of obtaining a phaser with its power supply very low or a .38 revolver with four shots left is almost too much temptation for many campaign players and should not affect the campaign overmuch, unless such an item falls into the hands of a super-genius with the motivation and resources necessary to exploit the happenstance without personal hazard.

I like the most advanced areas in my campaign to possess inventions such as telescopes (simple spyglasses), sextants, rudimentary alchemy, and higher mathematics (inspired, no doubt, by the esoteric pursuit of high magic and the symmetrical balance necessary to achieve "safe" magical results).

I tend to prescribe a technological level attainable in any certain area by villages and city states. The general population is assumed to be completely self-sufficient at lower technological levels, with "specialization" becoming prominent as technology rises to the "medieval" level. Thus, the populus has small inducement to risk the hazards of travel and usually live out their lives within short distance of their birthplace, excepting nomads and hunting parties. This further restricts the propagation of technology.

Technological breakthroughs are generally regarded as the closely guarded secrets of priests, guildmasters, and rulers . . . and are disseminated to the average citizen or tribesman only when it serves the purpose of the possessor of same. One can easily imagine that "magic swords" were indeed wielded in days of yore . . . being more flexible, staying sharp longer, of lighter weight and therefore faster, and constructed with hand guards able to withstand stout direct blows. Ask any metallurgist about the ritual tempering of steel in living blood to produce the fabled blades of the Middle East. The raw materials were available elsewhere, but no ruler could glean the secret of Damascus steel from the privileged few.

The areas where technology has developed beyond the normal weal should be located at some point conducive to the dissemination of knowledge. Rivers are the superhighways of the ancient and medieval civilizations, and real advantage accrues to trade centers located thereon. This should not exclude the possibility of a "lost" civilization of advanced technology, cut off by some catastrophe of major dimension or pur-

October, 1979

posely kept secret by powerful magics or technology in some fantasy campaigns. But they are the exception, not the general case. Nor are established trade routes to be excluded from a non-standard technology campaign; they must involve much peril, however.

Areas with higher technology must be located near areas with agrarian capacity to support the increased specialization mentioned earlier. A favorable climate is also desirable for favored technological areas. Creature comforts must be obtained with reasonable ease to permit the more energetic to achieve higher goals. Periods of peace enforced by a strong military presence would permit a relaxing of some of the barriers of trade, thereby increasing the stimuli of foreign ideas. A resource to attract these traders and increase specialization would also encourage technology.

Some interesting benefits accrue in a non-standard technology campaign, although it must be considered early in the design stage or the range of technology might not fit the mythos desired. It is quite rewarding to observe the distraction of a player-character far from home attempting to purchase a light horse with worthless soft metal discs in an area where barter is the only trade medium technologically available. As with characteristics for types of creatures, I would recommend a mode of something akin to medieval technology with a spread on the lower end back to the Bronze or Stone age and at the upper end up to early Renaissance or Late Medieval technology. One last caution: The highest technology extant in an area well may be common knowledge but will also command the highest prices and may be rare or uniquely controlled to retain its use in that area for obvious advantage of the controller.

Religion is a fertile source of cults, political factions, subcultures, mores, and social structure. It is the wellspring of a whole character class. It has inspired warfare from the beginning of mankind's history. For those judges who prefer a one-mythos campaign, I recommend that you skip this section; it has little to offer you.

Most fantasy literature presupposes a multitudinous approach to religion. The introduction of many pantheons in a campaign will generally enrich it. While some societies may be based solely on a "state" religion, the interesting variety of religions in densely populated areas is obvious.

In fantasy role-playing, it makes the non-player characters more believable, inasmuch as they are split into factions and yet practice some tolerance to live together. I dislike sending the player-character to any or every village populated by humans to visit the temple of his choice as much as I dislike sending them to Elfland to hire Elves. Any civilized or barbaric group will have more than one religion, although the one that isn't predominant may be a branch of the main one (mode). I like to have no fixed method of determining how many religions will be practiced in an area, but recommend that the number rise geometrically with the population . . . resplendent with false gods, minor gods, household gods, and class gods.

The judge need not enumerate or "flesh out" any more than necessary at any point in his campaign. Leave it up to the player-character clerics to determine rituals, hierarchy titles, and the less important details of the minor religions unless it is important to the action in your campaign. While it leaves few decisions for your clerics to make if you have few religions, the introduction of many religions will put political and social limits on the sway of the religions in your campaign, making it more competitive for the clerics and a ready source of quests, conflicts, and conversions. Not every religion needs a temple, but every judge needs controls and motivators in a large campaign.

Languages have been frequently glossed over in many campaigns because of the need to encourage, not discourage, interaction between the players and the non-player characters which add spice to play. All intelligent creature types will develop unique dialects if separated by any real distance from their fellow creatures.

The common tongue should pose a real danger of misinterpretation every time it is used to communicate with creatures of less than average intelligence, and even highly intelligent creatures if the player-characters have traveled far from their original stamping grounds. In other words, the common tongue should develop dialects as the player-characters move further away from the place where they learned it. The introduction of some dialectic differences and different languages for the same type of creatures will not increase playability for action at the inception

(cont. on page 25)



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Tell them you saw it in The Dragon

Sorcerer's Scroll

(cont. from page 12)

level Assassin? Still a bit high, but it is at least a bit more reasonable for use in a game. As he stands, Kane could pretty well blow away nearly anyone or anything in a normal campaign. More on this subject as new figures appear.

* * * * *

Many of you are aware that we are readying a number of new modules — some of which might be on sale when this sees print — including a couple that I have done, Lawrence Schick's *White Plume Mountain*, a number from Len Lakofka, (finally) *The Queen of the Demonweb Pits*, the Origins '79 tournament dungeon (as well as the one used at Origins II, *Expedition to the Barrier Peaks*), and some others too.

What you might not be aware of is that we are also doing work on modules for such games as *Boot Hill* and *Gamma World*.

As I've mentioned before, when I get an opportunity, I always play in Jim Ward's excellent *Metamorphosis Alpha* campaign, where Ernie Gygax, Skip Williams, Tom Wham, and I — just to mention a few of the regulars — have managed to establish a power group called "The Vigilists."

The core characters began with some good mutations and proceeded to acquire a fair selection of tech items, a command ring, and then some D&D characters, as described in a past article.

Well, Jim was in the area recently, and we gathered to play one evening. The sneak slipped in the GW module he is working on, so unbeknownst to us, we play-tested a portion of it for him. The play was different from MA, but a lot of fun and highly hazardous too. We lost a green bracelet, a laser pistol and several energy cells, 5 sets of duralloy swords and shields, and one member of the party. Luckily, we chanced to find the right place and do the right thing, so we ended up with a small army of 100 "cargobots," small robots with treads for locomotion, tentacles for manipulation and attack, and a reasonable armor class and hit point total.

With that sort of backing, perhaps we'll no longer be fearful of risking the D&D characters and go for an all-out attempt to clear a whole level for the Vigilist cause. MA and/or GW are fun, alone or with a D&D/AD&D Campaign!

ORIGINS report

(cont. from page 10)

hobby, meeting the people that keep fantasy alive is really worthwhile. Some of my fellow gamers think that others get rich by putting out board games, rules, and miniature figures. Actually, no one has done much more than earn a hard-fought living from the hobby yet. Most of the "pros" have to pay for their bread and butter with some other line of work, and enjoy gaming only as a paying hobby.

Although classes and symposia are part of every convention, ORIGINS and other gaming conventions have a series of "cracker-barrel" discussions or "roasts" where the public can get back at the designers who have offended them in some way. One of the most interesting sessions at ORIGINS was with Simulations Publications Inc. (SPI), of board-game fame. The eminence of SPI was on stage. A hush came over the audience.

Jim Dunnigan is a games theoretics wizard, and wanted everyone to admit it. Just because his team makes a teeny mistake every once in a while doesn't mean it isn't the best. So, during the SPI talk session, James tried to roast the ears of assembled notables by announcing that from here on his organization would regularly put out errata sheets on other publisher's games. (Watch out, Gygax!)

Everyone was so flabbergasted that they were completely at a loss for words. Everyone, that is, save a feisty Greek who had the never to tell the Irishman that he should clean up his own act first. Then it was Jim who was at a loss for words.

Well, folks, that was the bad news. SPI's rumor mill is now grinding out the good news — the next advance in game theory that SPI will forge should totally eliminate the hexagon board. The logistic masterpiece that will glide forth from Dunnigan's R&D crucible is to be based on the

Armed Forces Procurement Regulations (ASPR), and vastly simplify them. To be called Zero Defects, its rule folder will invite all other publishers to publish errata if they can find any.

Zero Defects will also take the Department of Defense to task for requiring a three-foot shelf of books to play a game that can be reduced to a single sheet of paper. Final release of the game will have to await DOD security declassification.

After SPI had aired its dirty linen, Al Nofi had turned his in, and Dave Isby had dropped his last profound comment, there only remained to pack up and leave. As the crashing of felled display tables ceased and the parking lot emptied, a lone, holdout table stood solidly amid the debris.

The greatest of the master chaotic rulemakers was still laboring to balance his accounts. Lou Zocchi helped start all this, and all who think of him wish him well. He is the first and the last (Rumor: Lou's new fantasy combat rules for chimeras vs. pegasi, flying dragons, and hippogriffs will be announced soon and will add new aerial dimensions to fantasy adventures.)

Jam Sessions: Throughout the day and on into the night, the host of gamers enjoyed trading Eastern Front calamities and dungeon adventure tales. The blarney rivaled "war stories" from Saigon's non-combatants. But it was all good fun, and everyone enjoyed himself. Each had finally found others who understood their tales. After all, how can you talk about your hobby with someone who doesn't even know the difference between an orc and a groll?

Several clubs and players arrived in groups to see the latest developments in their hobby. The club that deserves finest mention, however, was represented by only one individual.

This club, from a remote village in faraway Florida, knew it could not attend as a group. The whole club of 12-16 year-old boys pooled their money and elected a single representative to go to ORIGINS. This alert fellow scouted the booths, sneaked into the classes without paying, and talked to everyone he could buttonhole to discover the most interesting game at the convention. After observing the spectrum of offerings, he came to a significant conclusion: "D&D," he said, "is where it's all at."

Even chaos can bring observant viewers to the right conclusion.

Did you Know? . . . ?

Of course we all know that July 15 is St. Swithin's Day, September 22 is the Autumnal equinox, and Guy Fawkes Day is celebrated enthusiastically on November 5. But, did you know that the Chinese Dragon Boat Festival occurs on June 10? Or that the Battle of Agincourt and the Battle of Balaklava (the Charge of the Light Brigade) were both fought on the same date, October 26?

You'll find these dates, traditional holidays, and future convention dates, along with some other more esoteric and little-known anniversaries in the upcoming TSR Periodicals Fantasy Calendar. This calendar will feature 13 full-page, full color pieces of art by several different fantasy artists, many of whom have done covers for *The Dragon* in the past.

Sound interesting? Check out next month's issue of *The Dragon* for more details on how to order.

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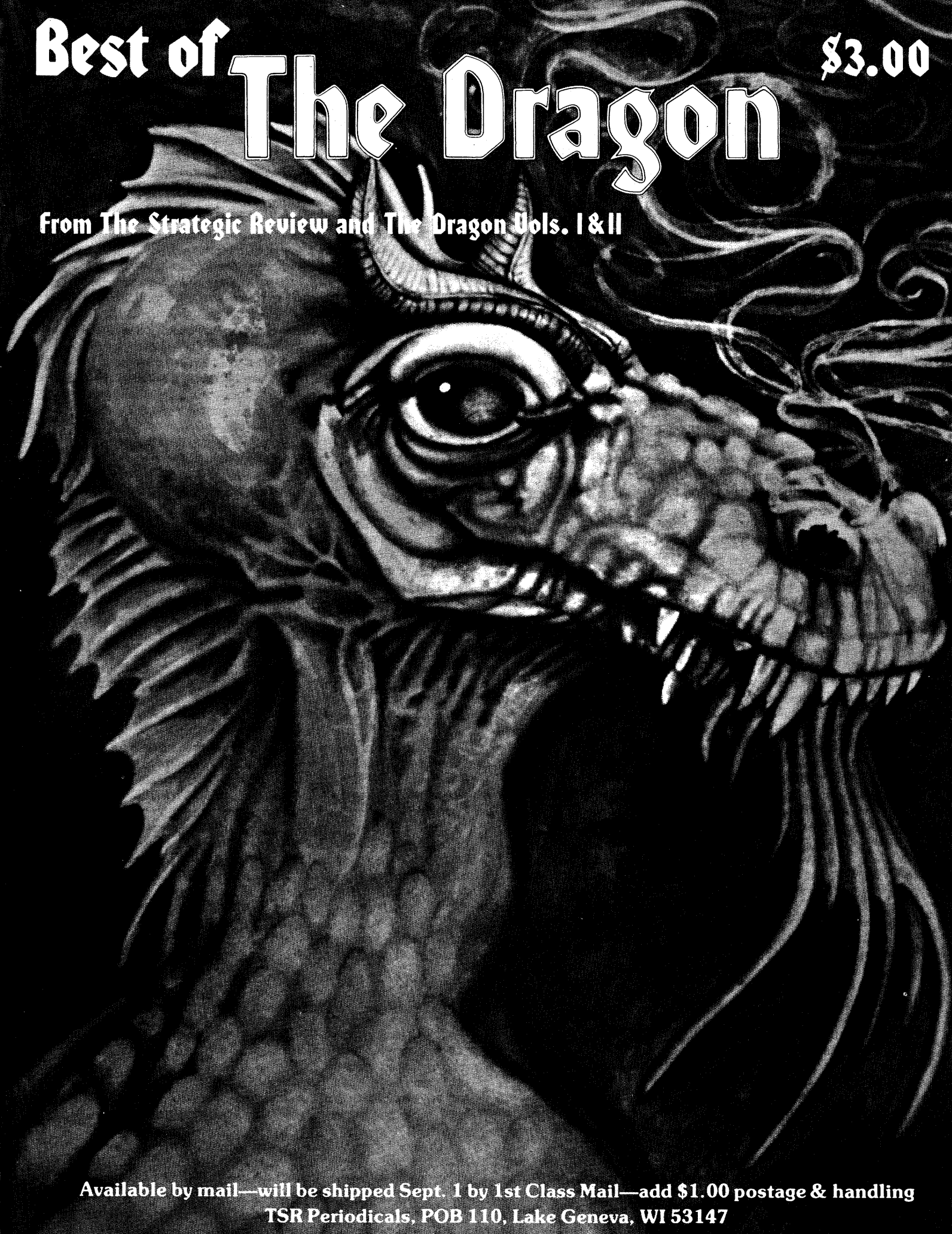
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ARMIES OF THE RENAISSANCE

Nick Nascati

Part V — Armies of Eastern Europe

Warfare in Eastern Europe (for our purposes, Poland, Hungary, Russia, and the Ottoman Empire, etc.) evolved along very different lines than the formalized linear warfare of Western Europe. This land, covered as it was with rolling plains, steppes and grasslands, has been, since ancient times, a land of horsemen. From the hordes of Attila the Hun to the mailed Spahis of Suliman, wave after wave of horsemen have swept out of the East. The major countries of Eastern Europe each refined the mounted warrior to suit their own special tastes and thoughts; these individual systems will be the subject of this article.

The one unifying force that decided the final design of military systems was that of defense against the hordes of Turks and Tartars that swept out of the Middle East. A study of these forces will be a fit starting point. The Tartars are the simpler of the two forces, essentially being the descendants of the Mongol hordes of Genghis Khan. Basically light horse-archers and spearmen, the force was bolstered by a small number, approximately 30%, of medium/heavy lancers. Their tactics as well were similar to the five rank formation of the Mongols. Under their greatest leader, Timur the Lame (Tamerlane), they cut a wide swath of destruction through the Ukraine and other parts of southern Russia and Asia. After his death however, their discipline and victories faded quickly.

The army of the Ottoman Empire however, is a very different story. It is interesting to note that they were the disciplined core of infantry for support. This core was the famous (or infamous?) Corps of Janissaries. These troops were raised as children from Christian slaves, to become one of the most efficient fighting forces of Renaissance Europe. Originally, they were armed with a strong composite bow and a saber. It was not long however, before firearms were generally adopted; not long after that they became highly proficient in their use. The Janissaries were not however, trained for maneuver. Their primary function was to form a stable base around which the Ottoman cavalry could maneuver and reform.

The Ottoman cavalry was the cream of their army, at least most of it was. The regular cavalry was fairly evenly divided between the elite, heavy Spahis of the guard, and the light Timariot, who were horse-archer/lancers. The Spahis, in full mail and helmet, were the equal of all but the heaviest European cavalry and formed the core of the Ottoman offense. The Timariot wore a light shirt of mail and a light helmet and used a strong composite bow to launch arrows a great distance. They also carried a scimitar and light lance for melees.

From 30% to 50% of the horse consisted of irregular light cavalry, who acted as skirmishers and scouts and were variously armed with scimitars, bows, javelins etc. Their overall value was minimal, though they did have their proper place in the tactical scheme. The last component of the army, which could be included here, is the Azabs. These were large groups of light irregular infantry, used as skirmishers who were armed with bows, muskets, etc.

The Ottomans had a healthy regard for artillery and were always well supplied with ordinance, usually more so than their Eastern European opponents. They had little trust in their hired gun crews however, who were very often chained to their guns.

The principal opponent of the Ottoman advance was the disunited Kingdom of Hungary. Along with Moldavia, Wallachia and Transylvania (which often fought on the side of the Ottomans), a heroic resistance was maintained up to the middle of the 18th century. The Hungarians

are unusual, in that they were the only European nation to have a national force of horse archers of sufficient quality to oppose the Turks. These were, of course, the famous Hussars. Trained to act as one with their horse, the Hussars were brave and daring, and when properly supported, they could undertake some remarkable assignments. Armed with a composite bow and saber, and later two pistols, the Hussars wore no armor save for an occasional mail shirt, and they relied on their speed and accuracy to accomplish their tasks. Supporting the Hussars, the Hungarians fielded heavy, feudal cavalry, similar in most respects to the armored lancers of Western Europe, except for certain national costume details. Other cavalry units consisted of light Wallachian and Moldavian lancers, some Tartars, and Croatian light cavalry, which were similar to the national Hussars.

Being a nation of horsemen since the days of their Magyar ancestors, the Hungarians had to look to mercenaries for a source of reliable infantry. From Germany, they hired pikemen and crossbowmen. From the Hussites of Bohemia, they hired companies of handgunners and additional infantry. These troops seemed somehow more trustworthy than the mercenary companies of Western Europe. Perhaps the seriousness of the Turkish threat gave them a common bond that went beyond monetary considerations.

The Kingdom of Poland held a position of great importance throughout the period, though they were often more concerned with the raids of Russians and Teutonic Knights than the Turkish threat. Cavalry was also the core of the Polish army, though not the light horse archer of the Hungarians. The Polish Hussar (as you can see, the confusion on the origin of the term has deep roots) was a heavy cavalryman modeled along the lines of the Byzantine Cataphract. His equipment consisted of a heavy breast plate, shoulder and wrist protectors, tassets, and heavy, leather boots. Their armament was extensive, consisting of a mace, two swords (one curved, one straight), two pistols, a lance and often a bow. The famous Winged Hussars were an elite unit drawn from veterans of the line formations, and were often held in reserve to deliver the final, decisive blow. It was not uncommon to find the Winged Hussars under the personal command of the Polish King, as with John Sobieski at Vienna in 1685.

Other types of Polish cavalry included Cossacks recruited from Lithuania, who fought with saber, javelin and bow, Polish light lancers, and the Pancerni, a curious looking medium cavalryman. The Pancerni wore a thigh length mail shirt, a mail hauberk topped by an odd looking flat cap, and heavy boots. They were armed with saber, bow, mace, war hammer and shield, and later added a brace of pistols to their equipment. During the 17th century the Poles began to form companies of dragoons, who wore a long coat like the infantry, and carried musket, saber, pistols and an axe.

Polish infantry played a secondary but not unimportant role in battle. Like the Janissaries, they formed a solid base around which the cavalry could maneuver. However, they were also trained and armed for the attack. They wore no body armor, except for the protection provided by their heavy clothes. They were normally armed with a long, curved sword and a musket. In addition, many carried a two-handed axe, which was used both in melee and as a rest for the heavy muskets of the period. Pikemen, though few in number, were included in the infantry units, and were useful in both attack and defense.

The last of the great powers we will discuss is Russia. Beginning with Ivan IV (The Terrible), Russia began to spread its might throughout the East, fighting several wars with Poland and the Tartar Khanates. The army of Ivan The Terrible was a curious mix of medieval and modern forms. The cavalry was small in size compared to the other Eastern powers, and was fairly evenly divided between light horse archers, and heavy, mailed lancers. The horse archers wore a padded jacket for protection over bright, peasant tunics, and low boots into which were tucked colorful, baggy trousers. Their weapons consisted of a composite bow, saber and mace; they were generally used for harassment, skirmishing and scouting.

The heavy cavalry wore a variety of armor protection, from ring mail to scale armor to metal plates sewn on to ring mail. They fought with a heavy lance, sword and mace, and carried a large shield. Most wore a simple conical helmet, often with a chainmail neckguard, nobles added a screen of mail which protected the eyes and nose. The cavalry forces

were also augmented by hiring large numbers of Cossacks from the steppes.

Russian infantry varied greatly in type and quality, and was often supported by units of German mercenaries with pike and musket. The best Russian infantry were the Streltsi of the Imperial Guard. They were all armed with musket, saber and axe, and wore a long, orange or yellowish-brown coat. The elite Streltsi of the Czar's bodyguard, wore a very unusual uniform, consisting of tight chain mail trousers tucked into boots, a mail shirt with brass strips for added strength, and a mail hauberk with a face screen similar to that of the noble cavalry. These bodyguards were generally armed with a bardische (a long, Russian battle-axe), and a saber.

Other Russian infantry included Zaporozian peasants who fought with battle-axe and saber, and foot Cossacks, generally armed with musket, arquebus or crossbow, who acted as skirmishers and scouts.

With the exception of the Turks, none of these countries had any real appreciation of the power and importance of artillery, and were very slow to adopt to Western methods. In fact, ambassadors sent to Russia by Elizabeth I of England, commented on the military maneuvers of large numbers of horse archers.

It was not until the reign of Peter the Great, that the Russians saw the need to adopt Western methods. He took the polyglot, antiquated army and turned it into a first class fighting machine. He introduced artillery, and made sure that his gunners were well trained. By the time of the Great Northern War in 1700, the Russian army could hold its own against the best. Peter's crushing defeat of Charles XII's Swedish army was firm proof of the fact.

Overall, the inclusion of a few Eastern units, or entire Eastern European campaigns, would make a colorful and interesting sidelight to your normal Renaissance wargames.

Next Time: Landsknechts and Reiters

Address All Questions and Comments To:

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SOAP BOX

(con't from page 21)

of a campaign, but will tend to restrict the movement of player-characters to fairly familiar territory (unless at the head of any army or the shoulder of an interpreter), until later in the campaign when the judge will be better prepared for such expeditions (or invasions). This may at first seem like a less important control for a large campaign, but it does have impact and will limit the wanderlust until you are able to cope.

Thus ends my diatribe against mothers, apple pie, and standardization. Although I abhor complication for the sake of miniscule tweaks which have little impact or importance on outcome in a game because it sacrifices playability, the net effect of a few design considerations when setting up a campaign will do nothing to harm play, spark the imagination, aid in the controlled growth of player-characters, and add much to the pleasure to be had by all.

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TOURNAMENT SUCCESS IN SIX STEPS

Jon Pickens

Editor's note: Unfortunately, by the time you read this article, we will be well into the convention season, and many of 1979's major D&D tournaments will be history. However, there's still the rest of this year, and course, next season. Winners of the various D&D tourneys will have already learned these important tips — if you finished less than first, read on . . .

With the convention season fast approaching, many of you will be participating in the D&D tournaments at the major cons. Expect to grapple with three special problems not usually found in local D&D games: party co-ordination (up to eight other people you've never played with before), scenario assimilation (figuring out the situation and what the designer wants you to do), and limited time (four hours or less). May the following suggestions smooth your road to the top:

1) GET IN. If you miss sign-up, don't despair. Second runs of the first round usually don't fill (for example, the evening Round I at Gencon XI was six teams short — 54 players!). After the first round of eliminations, you might still replace a no-show in a team that advanced. At Origins III, a whole team eliminated in Round I advanced to Round II because they were on the spot when an advancing team failed to show.

2) USE YOUR MAGIC. Most teams given magic don't use it well. The main purpose of your magic is to blow away or bypass obstacles you may come to grief on if you try the hack-and-slash routine. Take inventory before you begin and have the DM clear up any questions on how an item will work. Think of nasty and deadly combinations of magical attack to pull on your opponents, for good combinations are the icing on the cake. But know what you have and how to use it. At Gencon XI, the teams were given devices for summoning Earth and Fire Elementals. Some never knew they had these goodies until after they were eliminated.

3) HAVE A PLAN. Although extensive planning is not possible, simple drills agreed on before play (like "Fighters and Clerics surround the MUs and protect them") can be invaluable if the party is suddenly surprised. Most DMs will not let a leader just distribute people, so each team member should be able to tell the DM where he is going and what he is doing, no matter what order the team members must react in. If you are inexperienced, it is often better to stand on guard against an attacker than take a chance on independent action that leaves everybody's back open, or worse, blocks the heavy artillery. Even 20 to 30 minutes of planning out of a four-hour tournament can pay fantastic dividends in a crunch.

4) BE ATTENTIVE. If you don't think the DM is giving enough information, you may be in a situation where information, especially obvious information, is given only in response to specific questions. Usually you are in great danger. If you detect any discrepancies in DM description or action, start a "player-to-DM" questioning session immediately. Listen to what the DM says and how he responds to the questions of the other players. You should be able to tell if the slip was accidental (it usually isn't) and take action accordingly. Be polite and orderly; confusion in such situations is fatal! If the DM says all possible information has been gained, move on to something more productive.

5) AVOID WASTING TIME. Searching: If nothing much seems to be in an area, move out. Finding that Potion of Healing or Magic Sword won't do you much good if you run out of time. Arguments, the great avoidable time waster: Party arguments usually hinge on leadership or tactics. If these have not been resolved before you start, be prepared to lose time. If you must argue, don't do it while hostile monsters are closing in. The basic choice is fight or run — do one. Combat, the great unavoidable time waster: Streamline your combat by having a standard

operating procedure worked out. Strike hard, with the smallest guns necessary to do the job. Once melee starts, get in as many rounds as possible.

6) NEVER QUIT. If the scenario involves penetrating a known hostile area, avoid combat as long as possible. If the designer has made this impossible, kill whatever detects you once it proves to be hostile. Should you get into trouble, hopelessly surrounded, fight to the last hit point and take as many opponents with you as you can. In a tournament, the other teams are going through the same wringer, so fight smart, fight hard, and *keep moving*. As long as one team member is on his feet, you have a chance.

As a final note, never argue with the DM (I hesitate to bring this up, since in three years of DMing tournaments, I have only had one serious problem of this type, at Gencon IX). If you think the DM has forgotten something or made a mistake, bring it up politely and ask for a ruling. Once a ruling is made, pressing the point is a waste of time. Remember that one ruling against the party will usually not be significant, provided the team plays consistently well. What is significant is the loss of time, bad feelings, and the tendency of some players to quit after a minor setback or two. Guard against these, and you will seldom have trouble.

In conclusion, the goal in any tournament is to have fun. It is a greater pleasure by far to DM a group that plays fast and loose, pulls occasional surprise moves, and takes setbacks with renewed enthusiasm to win, rather than one that triple-checks every position and debates every move, turns surly in the face of adversity, and plays to win with grim-faced desperation.

Convention Schedule 1979-1980

Y-Con (October 12-13) at Kilcawley Center, Youngstown State University, Youngstown, OH. Boardgames and miniatures. \$1.00 admission. Co-sponsored by Armchair Strategists and YSU Student Government. For more info, contact: Armchair Strategists, c/o Youngstown State University, 410 Wick Ave., Youngstown, OH 44555.

Grim-Con (October 26-28) at the Hyatt Hotel, Oakland, CA SF and fantasy games. For more information contact: Grim-Con, 1749 Sonoma Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707.

RockCon V (October 27-28) at the Ramada, Inn, Rockford, IL. Sponsored by the Blackhawk Military Society. \$1.50/day, \$2.50 for the weekend. Napoleonics, Micro armor, D&D, board games, and painting contest. For more information, contact: Royal Hobby Shop, 3806 E. State St., Rockford, IL 61108. Phone: 815-339-1771. (See ad in this issue)

WINTERCON VIII (November 16-18) The winter version of Michi-Con. WinterCon is sponsored by the Metro Detroit Gamers. Has all the usual features. Contact: MDG, 2616 Kenwyck, Troy, MI 48098.

GEN CON SOUTH (February 15-17, 1980) at Jacksonville Beach, FL Ramada Inn. For more information, contact: Gen Con South, 5333 Santa Monica Blvd. N., Jacksonville, FL 32207.

Coast Con (March 14-16, 1980) in Biloxi, MS. Guest of Honor will be C. J. Cherryth. \$7.50 membership before November 1, \$10.00 after. For more info, contact: Coast Con, PO Box 6025, Biloxi, MS 39532.



'Druidic World Series'

Dear Editor:

Something has been bothering me about the Druid class in *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS*. That is, I know of a couple of people in Chapel Hill who don't know each other, but they are both the 'Great Druid'.

I was thinking that maybe you could have a small advertisement in which all people who have Druid characters of 12th, 13th or 14th level could send in their Druids. The editors of *THE DRAGON* magazine could then play out the characters in a sort of Druidic World Series. The results could then be shown in a later issue of the magazine.

THE DRAGON could also keep a duplicate of the winners for anyone who might wish to challenge one of the Druids. That way, Gary Gygax could be accurate in saying "There are only nine 12th Level Druids, nine 13th level Druids and one Great Druid."

Sincerely,
Steve Klein—NC

The stricture regarding the number of high level Druids is on a per world basis. As each campaign usually takes place on its own world, no problems arise in the normal course of events. If the two characters you mention exist in the same campaign milieu, the head DM has blown it, unless, of course, he posits a huge world with two or more completely separate land masses that have virtually no knowledge of each other. The standard copout here is that the two cultures exhibited parallel independent development in their social conventions, which is a mite farfetched, at best.

While we are flattered by the regard you hold our D&D ability in, I would not want the responsibility or the risk of angering or alienating the inevitable losers of any contest. The suspicion would always linger that one of us didn't play a particular loser as well as we might have. If I make a mistake with one of my characters, I suffer; if I do it with yours, you suffer. —ED.

'Abandonment of D&D'

Dear Sirs,

With this letter I would like to cover several items. To start with, I have a question concerning the article entitled: Deck of Fate. I have sought a deck of the Tarot for several years now, almost a decade, and as of yet I have not found a deck which appeals visually. Did Grey Newberry use an already existent Tarot deck for the artwork included? If this is so, would it be possible for me to contact Mr. Newberry in order to find out the name of the deck and where one may purchase same? If however, the illustrations are of Mr. Newberry's creation, I suggest that he continue his efforts and complete the deck. The three cards shown are without a

doubt the best examples I have ever seen!

Now then, a slight criticism. Well, may be not a criticism, but as to Kevin Hendryx's comments about *Bunnies and Burrows*. I think he has missed the point of *Bunnies and Burrows*. It would do better to look upon the game as one which is played when *D&D* become tiresome either from repetition or the desire to do something else. No one I have played the game with has really taken the game seriously, with maybe one exception, and there the fun was found. Something different is enjoyable after the same thing night after night. *Mugger!* may be seen in the same light, a bizarre game and hard for some to relate to, but I cannot wait to play this, just as I cannot wait to play *Bunnies and Burrows*, and I look forward to *Con Man*, *Arsonist and Terrorist*. By the way, is there any way to combine the games?

While reading Mr. Gygax's column, I was taken aback by his views on *AD&D* and *D&D*. For a person who created *D&D*, and now *AD&D*, and became known in the gaming world for his work on *D&D*, it seems that he is bent upon the total abandonment of *D&D*. When one says things like: "While *D&D* campaigns can be those which feature comic book spells, 43rd level balrogs as player characters, and include a plethora of trash from various and sundry sources, *AD&D* cannot be so composed," which implies that those who still mediate and/or play *D&D* are either lack-witted fools or otherwise, so it seems that said person has quite an active dislike for the game. For the majority of the article, Mr. Gygax proclaims the vast advantages of *AD&D*, how it will not be altered by the DM, shall suffer no abuses, and so on. It appears Mr. Gygax assumes that all one has to do is purchase the three books at \$10 each, and shall immediately become a faultless DM. Well, to this date I have yet to find a perfect Judge, either in *D&D* or *AD&D*!

But all is not lost, Mr. Gygax throws a bone to the players of *D&D*, yet, in praise (?) of *D&D*. That bone seems to be little more than a repetition of what he has said previous, but this time it is slightly altered to make it sound 'nice'. I say Thank You to Mr. Gygax for that 'bone', for at least the Judges of *D&D* will not be starved by his left hand, while he uses his right hand to tell the gaming world that *D&D* is obsolete.

Clayton J. Miner—NY

Con Man, Arsonist and Terrorist are still figments of the designers genius. Someday, tho, . . .

I think you missed the point that Gay Gygax was making. I don't feel that he was denigrating anyone who plays D&D; rather, he was disparaging the inequities of the system that allowed such ludicrous things to happen. No one here at TSR Periodicals, nor at the parent company (TSR Hobbies, Inc.) has any desire to ridicule or make fun of any of

our customers. That would be the height of stupidity, and repudiate the old saw about '... biting the hand that feeds you ...'

I was surprised myself when I saw the DMG. Like others who have read his columns, I was expecting a fairly immutable game system. We were all wrong in anticipating such a thing. Believe me, or anyone else that has read the DMG, when I tell you that there is still plenty for the DM to do in making it his unique campaign. Certain facets of game design and structure are supposed to be inviolate, as the tampering with certain aspects threatens the integrity of the design balance.

Face it, D&D was our maiden voyage in FRP games, as it was the hobby's. There were many flaws that could not have been foreseen, because the designers, Gygax and Arneson, could not possibly predict how everyone would interpret any given fundamental of design. Abuses to the INTENT of the game are rampant. I'm not disputing fun, or the right to creativity, or anything like that. For those FRP buffs who favor the wide open, heavily personalized type game, D&D is just the ticket. Some games, or campaigns, require an extensive briefing on where they deviate from the rules books before a newcomer can sit down and be competitive. Some campaigns are so far removed from the framework provided by the rules as to be almost unrecognizable as D&D. No harm in that, because AD&D will NOT be so wildly variable from campaign to campaign, and the pre-game briefings will be no longer necessary. Any indoctrination is best accomplished by having the veteran players brief the newcomer anyway. Strict adherence to the fundamental precepts of AD&D (and that leaves PLENTY to be extrapolated and created, as well as interpreted) will allow players from any group to sit down with any other group and be competitive almost from the start, because they have a good idea of what to expect, at least in regard to physical and metaphysical laws and precepts. This, I feel, is highly desirable. —ED.

'Bakshi's shoddy work'

Dear Editor:

En garde, Master Rahman and those of you who defend such shoddy pieces of work such as Bakshi's. (I'll refrain from referring to it as the 'Lord of the Rings').

Mr. Rahman states "There is no way for a film to capture everything that can be put into a book, and a film can express things no writer could hope to accomplish." Granted in most cases, but the film in question here very seldom reached any expression on its own.

As to the map mentioned by Master Cummings, a meritable idea. Rahman was concerned about it doing nothing more than stopping the action. Blah! A deep feeling of 'ripped-off' came to me (as well as minor shock), in Bakshi using stills when scenes

were too tough, too complex, or when he feared he would just blow the mood with lousy animation. Nothing could have broken the movie more. Verily, I feared greatly for the audience for just when the movie promised to at least meet base expectations all action would stop, unless you consider a horse's leg shifting or a flag unfurling in the breeze action, and it seemed certain someone would end up with a case of whiplash disgruntledly falling back against their seats. Especially after working and watching for two hours to get there.

It was also stated that the 'Lord of the Rings' is just too big of a book with its 500,000 words, 3 volumes, a novel forward, six appendices 1,300 pages, and a foundation such as the 'Silmarillion'. Ah, tut, tut, no excuse. Bakshi was aware of the bulk before he drew his -2 butchering knife.

In closing I'd like to thank both Mr. Cummings and Mr. Rahman for their definitions of 'ripped-off'. Ah, yes, and before I lay down the sword of tongue, I strongly disagree with Mark Hermansen. I feel that an amazing bulk of wargamers are quite pacifistic.

Let me say I am over six feet tall close to two hundred pounds and love to growl in the foam of my ale, I am also a sharpshooter, I practice nearly daily with the bow. I fight forest fires for the State of Washington and there's still little that I love as much as the initial attack on a small (several acre) fire where men and equipment are put to the test in most every way. I also think nothing of leading a foray into an orc stronghold with swords slashing spells slithering, beasts howling and hacking our way into its depths, yet I stop there. My violence goes no further.

As a parting thought think of the Game Con that could be held with the funds we spent in 'Nam', and the game developments we could reach with the Defence fund. Lets send those 'Russkies' some 20-sided dice.

In peaceful strength,
Jon of Stonehedge

'Wand of Wonder?'

Dear Sirs,

I would like to make a comment about an article called "PUTTING TOGETHER A PARTY ON THE SPUR OF THE MOMENT" by Gary Gyax. Although this article that appeared in *TD* #26 was most informational, there was one section that is somewhat confusing to me. Under the section of "miscellaneous items" there were mentioned many items that just can't be found in the basic *D&D* system. I realize that these items were probably mentioned in previous issues of *TD* or are certainly included in the long awaited for *DM Guide*. Unfortunately I haven't the right issue of *TD* or the *DM Guide* and would like to know what in creation a *Wand of Wonder* does. Therefore in the future, I would like to suggest that items that have yet to be published are explained fully and that those that were mentioned in something other than a rule book i.e. the *AD&D* modules, *TD*, etc. would at least have a reference as to where they were mentioned. Other than that I really enjoy reading *TD* and will continue to do so.

Sincerely,
Ron Maas — VA

You are correct in assuming that the Wand of Wonder is in the DMG. It would be violating the ethics of the DMG to give you all the details, aside from fact that the powers listed are only suggested.

I can tell you that it is a weird wand that has many different effects and abilities, but is unpredictable in the extreme.

Your point about referencing items is well

taken, but it remains to be seen if time considerations will allow it in the future. We are exploring the possibilities. —ED.

'Pleasure and a pain'

Dear Editor:

There is one aspect of *Dungeons & Dragons* which is both a pleasure and a pain: new ideas. The advances in the game create ever-changing worlds for the players to explore, but getting these advances to the players poses problems. The original publishing of *D&D* was an attempt to make public an expansion of the fantasy supplement in *Chainmail*. Then came *Greyhawk*, *Blackmoor*, *Eldritch Wizardry*, *Gods*, *Demi-gods & Heroes*, and *Swords & Spells*. The drawbacks with these were that one had to search from one book to another to find needed material, and the books got worn out quickly. *AD&D* has consolidated and refined this material, but as the popularity of *D&D* grows, so does the volume of new material. *The Dragon* has provided an outlet for this wealth of new ideas, making it available for the devoted *D&D'er*. But the problem of the supplement remains: the material is dispersed and the magazines are fragile.

I have an idea to help solve this problem; one that I think will benefit both TSR and the average *D&D'er*. The idea is loose-leaf supplements. As I see it the original purchase would be a hard-covered three-ring notebook with perhaps a *D&D* insignia on the outside. Inside would be three dividers corresponding to the three *AD&D* books, plus a set of the most-used playing charts. Later, as new material is accumulated at TSR, sets of supplements would be printed and sold to be arranged in the notebook at the players' discretion.

This system has several advantages for the *D&D'er*. First, all the material is under one cover. Second, that cover is a hard cover. Third, this also gives a place to keep other information. And last, loose-leaf sheets are cheap and, with proper stick on reinforcements, will last a long time.

The advantages are no less for TSR. Loose-leaf sheets are quick and cheap to produce. If you run out it is easy to print more. Mail-orders for them can be sent in manila envelopes at low postage. *The Dragon* provides a source of new materials, and easily obtainable supplements might encourage players to write in with more. The last page could be an updated price list. The one thing to look out for is putting two subjects on the same sheet of paper, thus restricting how the sheets are arranged.

To the reader: If you think this is a good idea write to TSR and tell them so. My vote is yes.

To TSR: Look out. Rival companies will read this letter and if you don't do it they will.

Hopefully,
Stuart Malone — MD

An interesting idea.

Any rival company had better be licensed, or suffer the lawsuits for copyright infringements.

—ED.

'First rate publication'

Dear Editor:

Enclosed you will find a check for \$24.00 towards a subscription to *THE DRAGON*. The reason for this is, to put it simply as possible, that *THE DRAGON* has in the last year turned into a first rate publication. Most specifically I am talking about the addition of "Little Wars" and the new features along with the general quality of the magazine itself.

With all the improvements there is one thing that bothers me and that is simply the lack of fiction in latest issues. I sorely miss the Gardner Fox, Andre Norton, and Fritz Leiber stories of old. I

would understand if you thought that these shorts would lessen the quality of the end product but would still miss them.

In closing, when all's said and done. I feel you have a fine product in *THE DRAGON* and look forward to the next "new and improved" *DRAGON*.

Truly
Lance Wm. Pickett — WI

Thanks for the kudos.

Fear not on the fiction: we have two by Gar Fox, one by J. Eric Holmes, and one by a talented newcomer, all in hand.

One will appear in Nov. — which one depends upon which art gets finished first. —ED.

'Why, Mr. Ward?'

Dear Editor:

This letter has been written to comment upon the article "A Part of Gamma World Revisited" by James M. Ward that appeared in the May '79 issue. In the *Gamma World* rule book, the Cryptic Alliance, the Seekers, "... travel and work in large populated areas, trying to get humans and mutants of all types to work together. They consider mutated animals to be inferior, but don't press the issue, and sometimes even accept their help. They are filled with an all-consuming hatred of the technology that brought about the destruction of civilization and seek to eradicate all traces of it from the face of the earth." The article says of the Seeker's history "humanoids and mutated animals were treated as gruesome vermin to be wiped out with maximum force" and "the group is led by Tral-Vash ... he uses a Fusion Rifle, Energy Mace, and Powered Scout Armor. Armories have been raided so that the group has a vast supply of weapons and vehicles." Why do the Seekers try to get humans and mutants to work together if they consider mutants "gruesome vermin to be wiped out with maximum force"? And why, if they are "filled with an all-consuming hatred of the technology that brought about the destruction of civilization" and "seek to eradicate all traces of it from the face of the earth" does their leader, Tral-Fash, use a Fusion Rifle, an Energy Mace, and Powered Scout Armor? Why have the Seekers raided armories so that they will have a vast supply of weapons and vehicles if they hate technology and seek to eradicate it from the face of the earth? James Ward, I would like some clarification in this matter.

Sincerely,
Christopher Beiting — MI

The answer to this very logical question posed by this careful reader of THE DRAGON allows me to expose one of my primary philosophies in all role playing games. It is my contention that all "good" referees should make it their duty to change large portions of the concepts presented in any given role-playing game. I am not referring to the mechanics of any given game: things like combat systems, the operation of technological devices or magic items, the limits posed towards character classes, and the like. What I like to change are the types of things presented. When there is a list of 100 magic items, I like to add 100 of my own. Where there are 50 creatures listed in a game, I like to slightly modify the abilities of 20 of them. When I created (with a great deal of help) the cryptic alliances, I naturally changed them in my own game so that my players couldn't use all that information in the booklet to their own advantage. So, we see a group of Seekers given in the booklet that dislike animal mutants and in my game hate animal mutants. We see a group of Seekers given in the booklet that are filled with an all-consuming hatred

of technology and in my game desire things like energy rifles and pistols and grenades and powered armor, but violently hate missiles and attack robots and anything capable of causing "LARGE" scale destruction to life and property.

I was rightly called to task for this divergence from the written norm, but I hope this statement of mine will answer the question and allow me to continue to travel far afield from what is considered normal and proper. —J. Ward co-author of GAMMA WORLD

'Horsefeathers!'

Dear Editor:

The new *Dragon* looks great! I had to get that out before I get to the nasty part of the letter . . . you've done an excellent job of combining *Little Wars* into *THE DRAGON* . . . the seams barely show. Your article mix is about right, a good proportion of fantasy to historical gaming articles. Keep up the good work.

Now for the nasty part. Mark S. Day, in the *Dragon's* Augury of VIII, #12, (TD26) makes a statement in his review of Mercenary that I cannot let pass. He says: "I would like it a great deal if the folks at GDW would put out a correction to their earlier rules, where it is stated that the only effect of a vacuum on combat with conventional explosive weapons is that they are silent. Even my limited recall of chemistry suggests that it is impossible to sustain an explosion without oxygen, so that without using expensive cartridges containing a built-in oxidizer, combat with "conventional" weapons in outer space is impossible."

To put it mildly, Horsefeathers! Mr. Day is partially correct in that many explosions require oxygen (not all explosives do, however). He is incorrect in that the propellant in all modern cartridges contains a "Built-in oxidizer" already. How does he think a "conventional" cartridge gets its oxygen? The powder is sealed in the metal cartridge case, and the air inside the case does not contain enough oxygen to sustain combustion. For reference, consult any good chemistry text, or a pamphlet put out by the Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers' Institute, *Properties and Storage of Smokeless Powder*, which states "Oxygen from the air is not necessary for the combustion of smokeless powders since they contain sufficient built-in oxygen to burn completely, even in an enclosed space such as the chamber of a firearm."

It is a shame that an otherwise fine review should be flawed by an ill-considered statement such as the above.

Very truly yours,
Loren K. Wiseman — GDW

'Interesting features'

Dear Editor:

TD26 contained several interesting features, some of which I'd like to comment on.

First, *GIANTS IN THE EARTH*; This, as a whole, was very well done (although the authors didn't explain such terms as INT: 18(56%) & looks like a promising feature. Personally, I would like to

see a special article done on the characters, weapons, creatures, & artifacts from LOTR. This would take a great deal of effort on the authors' part & would undoubtedly cause a lot of feedback from enraged fans.

Carl Parlagreco's feature on alignment was also well-done, & clarified (for me, anyway) the differences between, for instance, Chaotic-neutral & Chaotic-evil.

I enjoyed *MUGGER!* by Kevin Hendryx, but he left out an important detail. After a "Congressman" attains 15,000 Exp. Points, he can become a "President" (5% chance of winning election per every \$100,000 put out to buy votes.) This occupation in no way limits the amount of crimes he can commit, in fact, it tends to encourage more of them.

The "Barghest" in *DRAGON'S BESTIARY* was well thought out, detailed, & consistent with the "laws" of AD&D. Who was the author?

Thomas Holsinger's *STRENGTH COMPARISON TABLE* left me somewhat confused. He equated a strength of 18/00 with ogre strength, which I agree with, (the PSIONICS section of the *PLAYER'S HANDBOOK*, under "Expansion", states this) but under "Equivalent Monster Strength" it says "21". I consider 21 str. vastly more powerful than a paltry 18/00, & here's why. The *MONSTER MANUAL* states that giants have strengths of from 21-30. This doesn't mean they are stronger than human-types, pound for pound. They need this extra strength just to be able to walk, or even breathe! The feature in *TD 13* (written by one Shlump da orc) showed that the average hill giant weighs in at around 1000 lbs. I don't think anyone with 18/00 str. could even move hauling this much weight, let alone fight. Certain titans are stronger than average (for titans) & can inflict 8d6 damage. Since maximum giant strength is 30, I would put these titans at around 31-34(?). I hardly think trolls are as strong as ogres & would give them a strength of about 17. Ogre-magi & ettins would rank with the lower 3 classes of giants, according to their body weights. *TD 23's* *SORCEROR'S SCROLL* states that at 19str., creatures get +3 to hit & +7 damage, and at 20str., +3 to hit & +8 to damage. These figures would rise sharply beyond 20str. I would like to point out that the hit prob. & damage bonuses don't usually apply to "monsters", as their hit prob. & damages are already computed into the charts (e.g. a kobold needs an 18 to hit a man in plate mail, but a titan needs only a 4), & if they are using weapons they probably won't receive a hit prob. or damage bonus, as few are adept enough with weapons to receive any.

I consider dwarves, elves, gnomes, halflings, & humans to have about the same average strength, unlike Mr. Holsinger's table, which gives gnomes & halflings an average strength of 4!! Anyone who's had characters slaughtered by crazed gnomes can tell you they're a lot stronger than that. Besides, the *PLAYER'S HANDBOOK* shows that the minimum strengths for either race (male or female) is 6! I wouldn't rate brownies, leprechauns, or pixies so low either. They may be small, but they aren't helpless. All in all, I would rate Mr. Holsinger's article as fair. He tries to impose some kind of order

to the rating of various monsters' strengths, & only partially succeeds.

I liked the *BOOT HILL* article, by Michael Crane. The game system is excellent, although short, & any additions to the game are welcome.

In closing, I'd like to ask a couple of questions:

A) What happened to Dave Trampier? His art in *TD* has been missed for some time now.

B) In *TD 25's* *GAMMA WORLD* article about Cryptic Alliances, why don't some creatures have a charisma rating?

Sincerely,
Crain Strenseth — SD

It sure is nice to get pleasant letters once in a while.

Your comments vis-a-vis the Strength Comparison article are best answered by the author. I hope to have his reply next month.

The barghest was designed by the author of AD&D, our publisher.

As you may have noticed last month, Wormy has returned. Wormy's creator got married and moved to California, but he promises that Wormy is back to stay. As to more of Dave's art, that is up to him and his job in CA. One can always hope . . .

GAMMA WORLD's rules provide that mutants do not have charisma ratings. —ED.

'An excellent job'

Dear Editor:

I'm glad to see many of the older columns (such as this) back in *THE DRAGON*. Your new staff is doing an excellent job. Why the change of logos? I thought something would be in the *Rumbles* but it wasn't. I personally liked the old one better. The *Giants in the Earth* column is very good and hopefully it will be a permanent feature. My compliments to the TSR Games staff for the new *Judges Screen* and the boxed *Boot Hill*. The artwork is fantastic! Here's hoping you get some positive letters instead of overly critical ones.

Sincerely,
Greg A. Patchell — PA

Ahh, the logo . . . Had I known I would get so many letters, I would have explained up front.

Nobody loved the old logo more than I did. Not only was it a gorgeous piece of unique art, but it was rendered for me by someone I admire very much. However, it was a hard logo to use, because of its odd shape and unique composition. It could only be used so small, then the detail blurred out and got muddy. It took up a lot of room, even at its smallest. It was also nearly impossible to read from any distance at all.

It is that last reason that weighed heaviest in the decision to scrap the old logo: it could not be deciphered from farther away than 15' or so, unless you already had seen it or knew what it said. This factor hindered over the counter sales — who will buy a magazine that they can't even read the title on? Made it hard to spur impulse purchases, you know?

THE DRAGON is in the process of designing some new T-shirts for next season. There is every likelihood that at least one of them will feature the old logo . . . —ED.



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GIANTS IN THE EARTH CLASSIC HEROES FROM FICTION & LITERATURE

Lawrence Schick and Tom Moldvay

INTRODUCTION

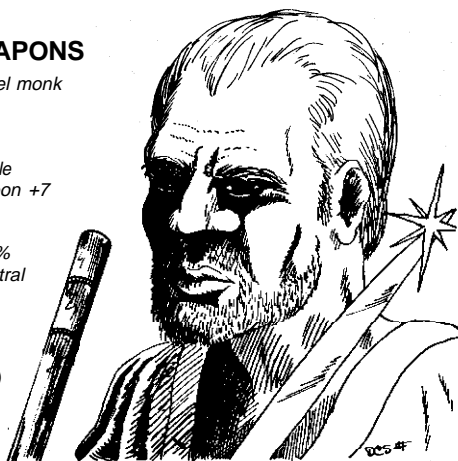
The purpose of this article is to add an element of novelty and unknown danger to the DM's high-level encounter table, and to give players a chance to actually meet up with heroes from their favorite fantasy books. The referee is advised to use these characters with discretion. They are a lot of fun to run, and the players should have an interesting time dealing with them.

These heroes are all in some fashion exceptional, and thus they deviate a bit in their qualities and capabilities from standard D & D. Also, most originated in other universes or worlds, and so were not bound by the same set of restrictions that apply to the average D & D character. Some are multi-classed, for example. This system has been used to describe the skills and abilities of the characters as they appear in the literature, even though some of these combinations and conditions are not normally possible. In addition, some minor changes have been made in order to bring them in line with the game and to enhance playability.

Note: For the game purposes of these heroes: Dexterity 18 (00) gives +4 on Reaction/Attacking, -5 Defensive adjustment and three attacks per round for high level fighters. Constitution 18 (00) gives fighters +4.5 per hit die bonus.

Piers Anthony's SOL OF ALL WEAPONS

20th level fighter/ 14th level monk
ARMOR CLASS: Variable
MOVE: 28"
HIT POINTS: 122
NO. OF ATTACKS: Variable
DAMAGE/ATTACK: Weapon +7
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES: Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 50%
ALIGNMENT: Lawful-neutral
STRENGTH: 18 (91%)
INTELLIGENCE: 11
WISDOM: 13
DEXTERITY: 18 (00%)
CONSTITUTION: 18 (58%)
CHARISMA: 16
HIT BONUS: Variable
PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil



Weapons:

Single Sticks (paired wooden sticks, 3' long):

4 attacks per melee round, +3 to hit, 1-3 damage per hit (+7), armor class = -3.

Daggers (matched pair):

4 attacks per melee round, +3 to hit, 1-4 damage per hit (+7), armor class = -2.

Sword (basket hilted):

3 attacks per melee round, +3 to hit, 1-8 damage per hit (+7), armor class = 1.

Staff (metal):

1 attack per melee round, +3 to hit, 1-10 damage per hit (+7), armor class = -7.

Morning Star (spiked ball on chain):

2 attacks per melee round, normal to hit, 1-20 damage per hit (+7), armor class = 3.

Club (wooden):

2 attacks per melee round, +3 to hit, 1-12 damage per hit (+7), armor class = 0.

Sol of All Weapons is a well-muscled yet slender man about six feet tall with medium-long blond hair, blue eyes, and a short scant beard. He wears dark pantaloons cinched at waist and knee, a loose white jacket reaching to his hips and elbows and left hanging open at the front, elastic sneakers, and a heavy gold bracelet clasped on his left wrist. He pushes a small, one-wheeled cart containing his six weapons.

Sol comes from post-cataclysmic America. The heart of Sol's world is the battle circle — a 15-foot ring of finely-barbered turf. A boy becomes a man by learning to master one of the six weapons; sword, staff, morning star, club, daggers, or single sticks. Sol is the only man to ever master all six weapons. Serious fights in the battle circle are for fealty. The loser swears allegiance to the winner. If the loser already has warriors sworn to his service they also swear allegiance to the winner. In such way are tribes formed.

Sol is not only an incredible natural athlete who has developed his skill by defeating the best fighters of his world, he has also been trained in the scientific arts of fighting by technical experts. (He has a monk's fighting skills without the thievery abilities or clerical skills.) Sol is ambidextrous and can fight with both hands at once if using daggers or single sticks.

Sol united the North American tribes and became master of a nomad empire. He was fighting a rear-guard action in China against hopeless odds when he was teleported to a new universe. His magical resistance is due to his being born in a non-magical universe.

Sol was undaunted by suddenly arriving in a strange universe. He is setting out to conquer this new world by the methods he knows best, by defeating its best warriors and thus gaining their fealty. When encountered, he will mark **out** a battle circle (if possible) and challenge the best fighter in the party (regardless of the person's alignment). If there is no single character who stands a chance against him, Sol will fight two at once.

If his challenge is accepted, the combatants fight until one is unconscious. Treat as a normal fight except that as **wounds** are not struck to kill: when a character reaches zero hit points there is a 75% chance he has been knocked unconscious, (1-10 turns), and a 25% chance he was killed accidentally. When a character regains consciousness he regains 50% of the hit points lost during the fight. If Sol is defeated in the circle he will serve the character or characters who defeated him. He expects the same service if a player character loses.

If no one will accept Sol's challenge, his reaction to the

party is rolled at -2. He has learned about magic and considers it unmanly. If Sol sees any magic-user attempting a spell he will immediately attack the party, preferably the magic-user throwing the spell. When fighting outside the battle-circle, Sol will attack to kill as there is no honor in the combat.

REFERENCE: Battle Circle (paperback, published by Avon Books). Battle Circle is a collection of three previously published novels: *Sos the Rope*, *Var the Stick*, and *Neq the Sword*, all by Piers Anthony.

Tanith Lee's ZORAYAS

23rd level magic-user
ARMOR CLASS: -3
MOVE: 9"
HIT POINTS: 40
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-8 each
SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES: See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard
ALIGNMENT: Lawful-evil
STRENGTH: 7
INTELLIGENCE: 18 (93%)
WISDOM: 17
DEXTERITY: 6
CONSTITUTION: 10
CHARISMA: 18 (00)
HIT BONUS: None
PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil



Zorayas is the thirteenth daughter of King Zorashad of Zojad who conquered sixteen kingdoms. Proud Zorashad set up inscriptions whereon he claimed to be the "Mightiest of the Mighty, Ruler of Men and Brother of the Gods, whose equal is not to be found under heaven." It was a mistake. Zorashad was brought low by Azhrarn, Prince of Demons. The empire dissolved, and all Zorashad's wives and children were slain, except for Zorayas, newly born on the night Zojad was razed.

A nurse ran away with the baby, but near dawn, the nurse's heart gave out. Zorayas fell to the road and rolled down a hill. Both her arms were broken, and the lower half of her still soft face became deformed.

Zorayas was saved by a hermit who healed her as best he could. Zorayas grew up, her face hideous, her arms twisted and pain-racked. She did not know she was abnormally ugly until a son of one of the kings who overthrew Zorashad slashed her across the cheek with his riding crop and mocked her. The hermit died soon after and Zorayas tried to carry on his work of healing men and animals. But the people ran from her, thinking she had the evil eye. All fled except for a pedlar who raped her.

Embittered, her ideals twisted inside-out, Zorayas turned to black magic, quickly becoming an expert. She conjured up Drin smiths (lesser demons) to make her a suit to hide her deformities. The armor is +5 and gives her the fighting abilities of a 16th level fighter of normal strength and dexterity. Only she can use it. The armor is of black iron, chased with silver. Zorayas wears iron gloves and an iron mask covering her face below the eyes, leaving her long-flowing copper hair free.

With the aid of her magic, Zorayas avenged herself for past torments and reconquered all the lands her father had ruled. She even trapped Azhrarn in a specially-prepared room and threatened him with death.

Azhrarn is unpredictable. Instead of being angered, he chose to be amused at Zorayas' audacity and re-made her face and arms so that Zorayas became enchantingly beautiful. As Azhrarn predicted, such beauty combined with Zorayas' personality could only lead to mischief in the world of man. Zorayas has her father's pride with a temperament geared toward vengeance and domination. She worships Azhrarn and, when he touched her, "Something of his fascinated wickedness, his delight in the sport of tangling the plans of mankind permeated her bones."

It amuses Zorayas to watch the antics of an individual smitten with love for her. If she removes her iron mask, any character gazing at her must save versus magic (human males add 4 to their saving throw) or be charmed. Once she has charmed a character she will torment him for sport, often demanding gifts as tokens of affection. When the character has nothing left to give her, Zorayas will leave him with his love unfulfilled. There is a 10% chance that the charm will have become so strong that the character will become suicidal once Zorayas is gone.

Zorayas may be accompanied (50% chance) by her bodyguard, 2-8 fighters in plate, each fighter 7-12th level. If she encounters a Lawful evil character willing to worship Azhrarn (by donating 10% of his earnings each adventure) she may give that character appropriate gifts (probably taken from other party members).

SPELLS: (* = preferred spells)

1st	2nd	3rd
Burning Hands	Detect invisibility	Dispel Magic
Detect Magic	Fools Gold	Fireball
Sleep	Mirror Image*	Fly
Magic Missile	Web	Monster Summoning I
Shocking Grasp	Wizard Lock	Phantasmal Force
4th	5th	6th
Charm Monster*	Animal Growth	Death Spell*
Hallucinatory Terrain	Conjure Elemental	Geas*
Minor Globe of Invulnerability	Distance Distortion	Monster Summoning IV
Monster Summoning II	Monster Summoning III	Spiritwrack*
Polymorph Other*	Transmute Rock to Mud	Tenser's Transformation
7th	8th	9th
Cacodemon* (her armor serves as protection)	Trap the Soul*	Power Word, Kill*
Monster Summoning V	Polymorph Any Object*	Monster Summoning VII
Reverse Gravity	Otto's Irresistible Dance	Imprisonment* (after first charming victim)
Simulacrum	Monster Summoning VI	
Vanish	Maze	

REFERENCE: *Night's Master* (paperback, published by DAW Books) by Tanith Lee.

Clark Ashton Smith's MAAL DWEB

20th level magic-user
ARMOR CLASS: -1
MOVE: 9"
HIT POINTS: 61
MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard
ALIGNMENT: Lawful evil
PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil
STRENGTH: 12
INTELLIGENCE: 18 (96%)
WISDOM: 16
DEXTERITY: 15
CONSTITUTION: 17
CHARISMA: 16

Amulet of diminution and enlargement, bracers of defense: AC 4, necklace of adaptation, periapt of proof against poison, ring of protection +4, wand of polymorphing.

Preferred spells: maze (special — see below), all charm spells, flesh to stone, globe of invulnerability, meteor swarm, all polymorph spells, project image, teleport.

Maal Dweb has gone almost as far as his power can take him — he rules an entire solar system, and does so with the iron grip of a despot. Millennia old, he has nearly exhausted all the possibilities for amusement and interest on the six planets of Mornoth, Xiccarph, Ulassa, Nough, Rhul and Votalp, and now he crosses his silver interplanar drawbridge to other worlds in search of a challenge or some new thing.

Superficially, Maal Dweb looks to be an average man in his thirties, balding, nondescript, wearing somber clothes. However, his extraordinary nature will immediately be apparent if he is accompanied by one (35% chance) or even two (15% chance) of his special iron golems (see description below: the other 50% of the time, he will be unaccompanied). Maal Dweb is a very quick, clever and resourceful man, with an acute sense of the ironic; this sensibility is not often shared by his unfortunate opponents.

Maal Dweb is very much interested in the bizarre, the extra-normal, and any tragedy caused thereby. However, he will not really be



grateful for information pertaining to his interests, as he considers all creatures to be utterly beneath him, tools and pawns for his amusement (though he does not allow this to lead him to underestimate his opponents). He will occasionally seek out a challenge to keep himself sharp, and in order to even things up a bit, he has been known to leave all of his protective devices behind (of which he owns many more than those shown, as these are only his typical possessions when skylarking: when Maal Dweb is on serious business, he goes armed to the teeth).

Special Iron Golems:

ARMOR CLASS: 3

MOVE: 9"

HIT DICE: 80 hit points

NO. OF ATTACKS 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK 4-40

SPECIAL ATTACKS: None

SPECIAL DEFENSES: As standard iron golem

INTELLIGENCE: Low-average

PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil

Huge brazen automatons, Maal Dweb's golems have right arms ending in huge sickles, with which they can inflict 4-40 points damage on a hit. Their major differences from standard golems are the lack of a poison gas breath weapon, and the fact that their intelligence allows them to act without continuous instructions from their master.

Special Maze Spell:

This spell requires 7 segments to prepare, and may be cast on one creature only. There is no saving throw. The victim is transported to the entrance to Maal Dweb's extradimensional maze of evil plant life. He

(or she) will have no choice but to enter — the alternative is swirling, endless limbo. As the character moves into the maze, the thick, solid walls of plants come alive and writhe and rustle in his direction: tendrils twine, thorny strands whip, tiny mouths snap, grass entangles his feet if he hesitates. Progress is difficult, but retreat is impossible, as the passages close up behind the victim. (Druidic plant control spells will work in this place, but there is really no place to go but the terminus — beyond the rest of the garden is limitless limbo.) As long as the character keeps moving at a steady pace, he will be relatively safe, but if he stops, he will begin to feel drowsy, and desire to lay down and go to sleep. No saving throw is needed to throw this off, but if the character should give in to sleep (for whatever reason), he or she may be considered dead and eaten by the plants.

When the character reaches point B, he will suddenly be confronted by two huge hairy ape-like creatures (AC: 4; HD: 8; HP: 38, 34; # Attacks: 2; Damage: 2-12). These creatures are immune to all charm-type spells, and will seek to kill the maze victim.

If the character defeats the giant apes and makes it to the end of the trail, he will find himself at the base of a stone platform stretching out into the mists of nowhere. On the end of the platform is a pentagram, and rising from the vagueness beyond the platform are three stone columns, each of which is crowned with a solemn demon head. Attempting to advance out onto the platform will cause the last plant on either side to whip out with a paralyzing tentacle. If the character fails to make a saving throw vs. petrification, he or she will be held there by the tentacles and slowly laved with a polymorph-juice from the plants' flowers, until he or she exactly resembles one of the giant apes. The demon-heads will solemnly announce, "The adventurer _____ has met the fate ordained by the gods," and the new ape-thing will be released into the maze, never to escape.

If the character makes it to the pentacle, he or she will be instantly transported back to the point from which he left. Time spent in the maze corresponds to real time.

REFERENCE: *Lost Worlds* (Hardcover, published by Arkham House; paperback edition published in UK) by Clark Ashton Smith

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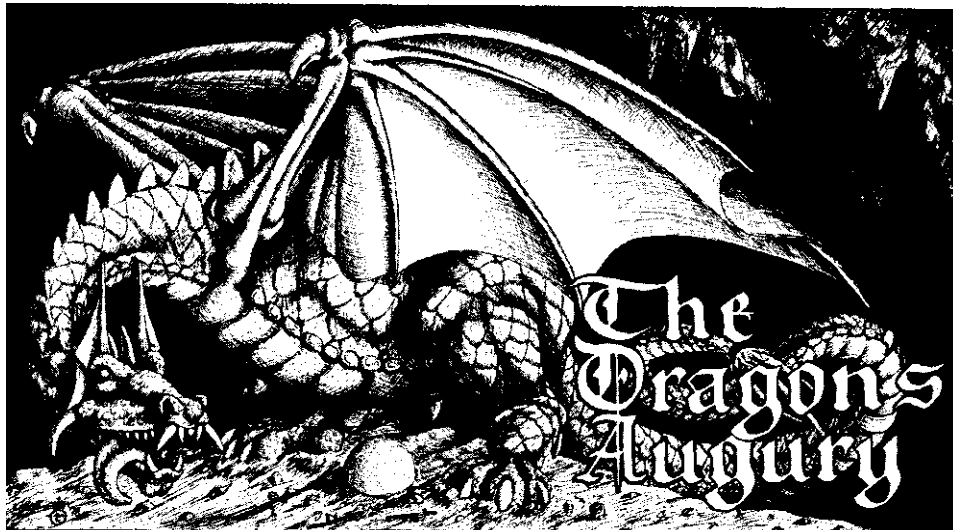
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Review

Spellmaker

Bruce Boegeman

There are a few, rare games that come along which are easy to learn and simple to follow, yet provide a wide and entertaining variety of action. SPELLMAKER by Gametime Games is one of these. The rules can be digested in about half an hour, and a game can be played in about the same time, but the possibilities of the outcome are endless.

Each player becomes a wizard in his tower at one corner of the board. The board is made up of areas called domains (alternately magical and non-magical) which are reached by paths through the woods. Any domain may connect with two or more other domains. Movement is one domain per turn, except for magical transport.

The objective of SPELLMAKER is for the wizard to direct his creatures to lead the princess back to his tower, which ends the game. There are five types of creatures: giants, princes, dwarves, frogs and toadstools. These are listed in order of strength, with the exception of toadstools, which can poison giants but have no effect on other creatures.

Combat is simple; any creature of another color which is in the same domain as a stronger creature at the beginning of the stronger creature's turn may be destroyed at the moving player's option. Creatures of equal strength cannot harm one another. Because the objective is not to annihilate your opponent, but to maneuver the princess back to your tower, combat is less important than in most games.

Of much greater importance is movement. As stated above, each player may move one piece one domain per turn, or use magic. Since combat takes place prior to movement, the moving of a stronger piece into the domain of a weaker piece allows the weaker piece to be moved before it is destroyed. The princess may be "picked up" by any movable piece, so simply moving the princess along with a giant does not insure that you won't lose her to that frog in the next domain. You must clear a path to your tower. The way to do this is by magic.

Magic is provided by cards which are printed with each of the types of creatures in each of the four colors, along with wild cards and null cards. To affect a creature, a wizard needs to have a card with the correct creature and color. These magic cards allow the wizard to transport his own or his oppo-

nents' creatures, turn them into something else, or eliminate or create them, so long as the creature affected is in a magical domain. After playing a card or cards, a wizard immediately selects fresh card(s) from the deck, always keeping a certain number in his hand.

An example of play goes something like this:

A blue prince moves into a magical domain, bringing with him the princess.

"The prince takes a hike," says the red wizard, playing a blue prince card, transporting the prince to the next magical domain.

"From nothingness, let there be blue giants," says the blue wizard, playing a null card and a blue giant card, and placing a giant on the board in the same domain as the princess.

"And to nothingness let it return," invokes Red, playing a blue giant card and a null card and removing the giant.

"Let there be dwarves," exclaims Blue, placing a blue dwarf with the princess.

"You know, that dwarf looks an awful lot like a toadstool to me," counters Red, playing the appropriate cards and replacing the blue dwarf with a blue toadstool.

"No, actually that toadstool looks like a prince," replies Blue, playing a blue toadstool and then a blue prince card.

Having failed to draw a blue prince card, Red creates a giant in the nearest magical domain to the princess. In his turn, Blue moves from the magical domain he was in to the nearest, non-magical domain.

"ZING!" exclaims Red, playing two red giant cards, transporting his giant over the princess, picking her up and moving away with her toward the red tower.

"Too bad that spell didn't work," sighs Blue, playing two null cards, canceling the spell and moving the red giant back where he came from.

It has been my experience that this game works best as a two-player game, as illustrated above. With two players, there aren't as many pieces on the board, allowing more freedom of movement. When there are more than two players, the traffic on the way home becomes frightful and there is simply no room to maneuver. Also, with two players each hold six magic cards, while for each additional player the number of cards drops by one and there are five more pieces on the board at the start. This is my only criticism of an excellent game, which provides fine entertainment and can be played in the time that it takes a DM to persuade some obnoxious player that his character really did die.

Review

Black Hole

David Cook

When I first read the blurbs on the back of BLACK HOLE, I somehow convinced myself that this was a game of deep-space combat. The only thing that really explains the game is the note that "BLACK HOLE is a two player tactical space combat game." That does not tell a person much about what the game is really like. Needless to say, I was disappointed when I opened the package. But not for long!

BLACK HOLE is a tactical science-fiction ground combat game. The story for it proposes a strange donut-shaped asteroid formed by alien powers and dotted with alien artifacts. In the center of the donut is the "black hole." Each player represents a major corporate power trying to beat the other guy to the goodies, something like merchant pirates of space.

Normally, I am prejudiced against future-time ground combat games. They usually manage to miss something, either in terms of weapon development, tactical theory, or even just the reason why people are fighting. At the same time, they are usually flexible enough to ignore the restraints of historical wargames. A good game strikes a balance between these two.

The most flexible thing about BLACK HOLE (or what many people would consider its gimmick) is the map itself. Go to a bakery and buy a donut. Now, imagine that donut as a single sheet of paper. Doesn't make sense, does it? That is what BLACK HOLE has done: placed the entire asteroid (both the outside and the inside) on a single mapsheet. Units are never off the map; if you go off one side, you reappear on the opposite side. Different areas of the surface have different movement and sighting values, to account for expansion and compression of terrain. Now add missiles to the map. Missiles achieve an orbit once they are launched, and will travel indefinitely. This is where the "bewildering maze" aspect of the game comes in. If a missile is launched diagonally across the board, it will spiral around the donut until it hits something. And that spiral includes both the inside and the outside of the asteroid surface.

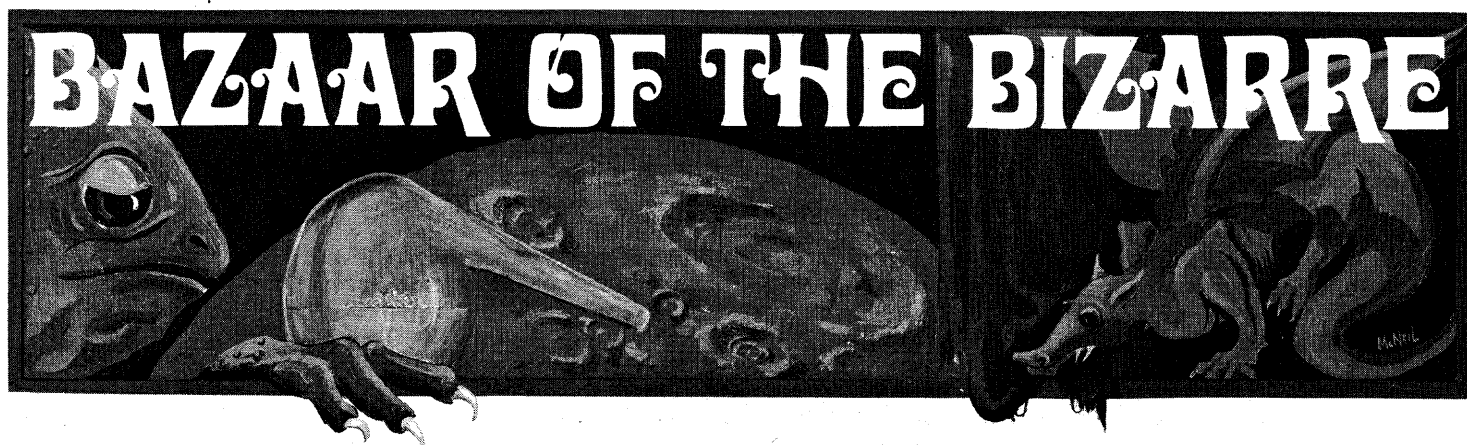
This, then, is basically what the game is about. Still (as I said before about ground combat games), it manages to miss some things. One problem is the countermix. Both sides are given nothing but missile- or laser-armed armor. If I were a great industrial power, I would want something more cost-effective, like infantry. Armor is expensive to replace. Defense strengths seem too low in some cases. A heavy with the same defense strength as a light doesn't make sense. After all, what is a heavy for?

Finally, there is the black hole itself. In the rules, it has basically one effect (which I almost missed in reading the rules). Shouldn't something of such supposed immense power do more to the game? If not, couldn't it be left out? The effect the hole creates could easily be reproduced in some other way.

BLACK HOLE is a fun game. It plays very fast and forces players to plan at least one move ahead. Movement of units becomes an important consideration. Objectives are simple.

BLACK HOLE is a Metagaming Microgame and sells for \$2.95.

(Augury cont. on page 38)



Orlow's Inventions Can Liven Up Your Life

William Fawcett

A problem that confronts most Dungeon Masters is that of the substantial effect most magic items have. Almost any item on the Miscellaneous Magic Table will almost immediately have a marked influence on play. This means there is a large gap between just a treasure of gold ("Just", did he say?) and any magic item. In some opinions, this aspect is further emphasized by the fact that a Magic Sword or similar item has a quite specific use and can therefore be effectively used by the most novice dungeoneer. Although an experienced player may find a novel use for some items, most are employable with very little imagination or planning.

The Extraneous Magic Table was created to add a new challenge for experienced players and to enable a DM to reward a player with a "magic" item for a large number of accomplishments.

The items on the Extraneous Magic Table are designed so that they are of no obvious immediate value. These items are for the most part magically endowed with an unusual power that makes them extraordinary, but not inherently useful. By their very nature, they challenge a player to find a use for their treasure. Watching a player trying to find a profitable way to employ an Obedient Hourglass or a Rag of Drying can also be an amusing and enjoyable experience for the DM.

A majority of the Extraneous Magic Table items were once part of the household of Orlow the Indolent, a 27th Level Magic User. Orlow created many of the items for convenience, for his hobby of gardening, or to pacify his rather strident wife, Frantasy the Vocal. When Orlow disappeared more than 1,000 years ago, his household was abandoned and its contents have since been distributed across the world. (Most were probably carried off by the servants when they left.) A few items are not of any known background and may have been created for unknown uses by less beneficent forces.

If tested, these items will show magic to a Detect Magic spell. Those that resemble other more potent items will be similar in appearance.

Extraneous Magic Table

From Orlow's Den

01	Match of Many Lights
02-3	Brush of Colors
03-4	Lasting Pipe
05	Torch of Control
06-7	Boots of Comfortableness
08-9	Quill of Longwriting
10-11	Enlarging Glass
12-13	Obedient Hourglass
14-15	Potion of Housecat Control
16	Scroll of Erasing

From Frantasy's Kitchen

17-18	Spoon of Stirring
19-20	Spoon of Eating
20-21	Sweet Onion Seed
22-24	Bottle of Pleasant Odors
25-26	Rag of Dying
27-28	Mug of Warming
29-30	Mug of Dribbling*
31	Mystical Brown Coating Box
32-33	Jug of Dyeing (Red)
34-36	Jug of Dyeing (Blue)
37-38	Broom of Sweeping
39-40	Eternal Salt Shaker
41	Eternal Peanut
42-44	Ever-Damp Sponge
45-46	Cloth of Polishing
47-48	Ever-Clean Towel
49-50	Needle of Sewing

Used in the Garden

51-52	A Stick of Standing
53-54	Troll Flower Seed
55-56	Dragon Lily Seed (1-4)
57-58	Chain Daisy seed (1-4)
59-61	Goldbug
62-63	Amulet of Caterpillar Control
64-65	Bracers of Cleanliness
66-67	Dust of Fertilization
68-69	Manual of Garden Flowers
70-71	Dust of Small Bird Repulsion

Orlow's Travel Kit

72-73	Coal of Warmth
74-75	Socks of Dryness
76-77	Canteen of Coolness

Misc. and Unknown Origins

78	Hammer of Nailing
79-82	Lodestone*
83	Returning Penny
84-86	Ring of Marking
87-88	Ring of Jasmine Odor
89-90	Cloak Clasp of Holding
91-92	Sphere of Darkness
93-94	Faithful Knot
95-97	Glow Cube
98	Helm of Blonding
99	Robe of Drying
100	Two additional rolls above

*Items marked are not magical

Explanation of Items

Orlow's Den

Match of Many Lights was created to save Orlow from having to search for a match to light his pipe. It has a maximum of 100 lights, but may be partially used.

The Brush of Colors was designed by Orlow to save him the bother of cleaning or changing brushes. It will magically produce enough paint of any color named to paint a 2' x 2' surface daily.

The Lasting Pipe may be found with the Match of Many Lights and will give up to 24 hours continual use from one filling. (Saves a fortune on Pipeweeds.)

The Torch of Control was designed to save Orlow the trouble of putting out the torches at night. Though lighting and burning like a normal torch, the Torch of Control will extinguish itself upon command.

Boots of Comfortableness will fit any feet on any humanoid creature of any size. They feel like house slippers (which they were) but are as durable as hard leather.

Quill of Longwriting is a writing instrument that Orlow developed to eliminate the bother and mess of inkwells. Treat as an everlasting ballpoint pen.

Enlarging Glass is a simple (if you already know about them) magnifying glass that is approximately 2" in diameter and 5 power. There is a possibility of two being formed into a set of crossbow sights.

The Obedient Hourglass (yes, dear, I'll be through in an hour) was developed by Orlow to flow at any rate he desired. It will complete its cycle in as little as 10 seconds or take up to 10 days to drain. If unordered, it will act as a normal hourglass.

The presence of Frantasy's familiar (a large white cat) caused the creation of the **Potion of Housecat Control**. It will allow the user to control one housecat for six plus his level's turn. Unfortunately, it did not work on familiars, which was said to have been one reason for suspecting less than dire cause for Orlow's disappearance.

The Scroll of Erasing was developed as a note pad for Orlow. Passing one's palm over anything written on this scroll will erase the scroll complete. (It was also rumored that the Wizard was enamored of a local lass and would compose passionate poems to her on this pad. Should Frantasy approach, he was then able to erase the incriminating verse.

Frantasy's Kitchen

After a few weeks of subtle reminders from Frantasy, the Wizard is said to have developed many utensils for her kitchen. (There is also a rumor that most of her efforts were inedible by even orcs, but as there are no records of survivors of her meals, this is speculation.)

To aid in baking, the **Spoon of Stirring** was developed. This spoon will stir upon command any substance up to the consistency of bread dough until ordered to stop.

Perhaps to avoid tasting the food, Orlow also created the **Spoon of Eating**, which enabled him to eat an entire days rations in one bite without indigestion. Being unable to bear his wife's tears, the Magician developed **Sweet Onion (seed)** which grows an onion that tastes normal, but smells like a rose. To rid the kitchen of other odors (i.e., burnt food) the **Bottle of Pleasant Odors** was developed. This will cause any room up to 30' x 30' to smell of rose, lemon, or pine.

The Rag of Drying will absorb and teleport into the ocean one gallon of any non-caustic liquid per day.

The Mug of Warming was originally designed for Orlow's favorite drink, mulled wine. It will keep up to one pint of any liquid warm indefinitely. Cold liquids poured into it are heated in 2-7 turns.

The Mug of Dribbling may have been created by Frantasy in protest to Orlow's fondness for wine. It is similar to the dribble glass found in joke shops.

The Mystical Brown Coating Box is often used with the Eternal Peanut. Up to 12 grape-sized objects placed in this box per day will be given a sweet and delicious brown coating. Also often used with raisins. The coating will melt in the hand if the coated objects are held for too long, leaving a sticky mess.

The Jug of Dyeing, Red or Blue, will dye any object placed in it the

appropriate color permanently. (One player put his hand in the Blue one and quickly acquired a new nickname.)

For obvious convenience, the **Broom of Sweeping** was developed. It can sweep an area 10' x 10' clean of loose dust and small items per turn. These are left in a neat pile.

The Eternal Salt Shaker will provide a small amount of salt for the user each time it is shaken. (It cannot be poured.) The amount is small, perhaps .25 grams per shake, but neverending if the player's arm holds up.

The Eternal Peanut will bring a smile to your character's face. This peanut can be opened repeatedly and will provide up to three ounces of peanuts in an hour. This will be enough to supply rations for one man for half a day of travel or one evening of munchies for two.

The Ever-Damp Sponge is a 2" x 2" sponge that is dampened for one week with a single drop of water. This is only damp and will supply very little water if squeezed.

To make cleaning the family silver easier, Orlow magicked up for Frantasy a **Cloth of Polishing**. This one-foot-square cloth, when rubbed lightly over any metal surface, will remove all grime and tarnishes and return the surface to a like-new luster.

The Ever-Clean Towel was developed when Frantasy's nephew visited and left a small mountain of dirty towels and stained carpets. This one-foot-square cloth cannot be stained or dirtied in any way. It can be torn or burnt.

The Needle of Sewing will allow its user to effortlessly sew through up to one half-inch of leather. It cannot penetrate the skin of any living creature, so the user can never prick himself with it.

The Garden

The **Sticks of Standing** were developed to hold up Orlow's tomato plants. These are 1/8-inch-thick, two-foot-long pieces of wood. When placed on any horizontal surface they will remain standing unless moved by a living creature.

Tired of having to replant his flowers every time a dragon traipsed through his garden, Orlow developed the **Trollflower** (seed). This is what would be described as a very hardy perennial. This flower grows slowly at the rate of 2" per month, but will regenerate as a Troll within 24 hours (unless burnt, or course).

The **Dragon Lily** (seed 1-4) may have been developed to contain the Trollflowers. When the bright orange blossom of the Dragon Lily is disturbed, it will spout a small burst of fire (can do one point of damage). Attempting to smell the blossom will normally result in a singed beard and eyebrows.

A **Chain Daisy** (seeds 1-4) looks and smells like a normal daisy. The plant, which stand about 1' high, has a stem and leaves that are tougher than cured leather. It is also highly resistant to fire and acids.

The **Goldbug** was developed by Orlow for unknown, but probably unsavory, purposes. One story says it was developed because, to Orlow, the plants were important and gold was plentiful. Another tale tells of a greedy brother-in-law who used to show up for prolonged visits until one day he discovered his gold had disappeared. The goldbug eats gold. It takes one gold piece per day to feed an active goldbug. (When not in the presence of gold, the bug will hibernate.) After consuming 20 gold pieces, the goldbug will lay 1 to 4 eggs that will hatch in one more day to begin consuming with their parent. Goldbugs are illegal to possess in most kingdoms. A.C. 2 and 1 HTK.

The Amulet of Caterpillar Control allows the wearer to control the actions of 4 to 24 garden-variety caterpillars.

After extended nagging by Frantasy about getting his hands dirty, it is said that Orlow developed the **Bracers of Cleanliness**. This would allow him to work in his garden and still have the clean fingernails his spouse felt were appropriate for his station (or at least hers). These bracers, when placed around a wrist, will cause all dirt and foreign matter to turn to dust and fall off. (This includes any gloves that may be worn, but not items such as jewelry or rings.)

Dust of Fertilization, when sprinkled on any plant, will cause it to gain a year's growth (or their full growth for shorter-lived plants) in one week. Does not work on Ents or Enchanted Plants.

Anyone reading the **Manual of Garden Flowers** will immediately

be able to identify all garden flowers and plants from a seed, leaf or blossom.

Probably a pest-control device, the **Dust of Small Bird Repulsion**, when sprinkled on up to a 20' x 20' area, will prevent any bird smaller than an eagle from landing there for one year.

Travel Kit

The **Coal of Warmth** is approximately 2" square and 1" thick. It stays at a constant temperature of 96 degrees Fahrenheit regardless of its surroundings. It was thought to have been used as a hand-warmer during winter trips.

The **Socks of Dryness** are a pair of foot wrappings that repel water like rubber, but which allow air to pass through.

The **Canteen of Coolness** holds one quart of liquid and will keep it at 40 degrees Fahrenheit regardless of its surroundings. It is said to work especially well with certain red wines.

Misc. and Unknown Origins

The **Hammer of Nailing** looks like a Dwarven Hammer, but is really a carpentry tool. Use of this hammer allows the construction of wooden items in 50% of the normal time. It will always drive a nail into any wood in one blow.

A **Lodestone** is a piece of magnetic rock with enough attraction to stick to iron. This is an unrefined lump and would need a skilled Mage working with a very skilled artisan to turn it into a compass. Most pieces will be 1" in diameter.

The **Returning Penny** may be the source of a well known cliché. When cast away from the bearer, this penny-sized copper piece will return to the player's hand from as far as 30' away. It will avoid all obstacles on its return flight.

The **Ring of Marking** will leave a permanent green ring on the finger of anyone who puts it on. This mark is similar to that left by brass and can be only removed with a Remove Curse or a Wish. The ring can be removed at any time, leaving the mark behind.

The **Ring of Jasmine Odor** will change the body odor of the wearer to a pleasant jasmine scent.

Cloak Clasp of Holding is a small silver clasp that will hold or release upon the command of the owner. It can hold only against 50 pounds of pressure and opens to clip to any object 1/2-inch thick or less.

The **Sphere of Darkness** was developed, it is rumored, to block the keyholes of the doors to Orlow's study and so prevent anyone from noticing he was napping and not doing exotic magic as he claimed. These are spheres one inch in diameter that consist of an area in which light cannot exist (thus appearing a dark black). They will obey any command given by their owner, but will never travel more than 20 feet from him for any reason. When not specifically ordered, a sphere will float directly over the head of the player (probably attracting unwanted attention or even derision). They cannot be harmed and will obey their owner(s) until his death. Upon the death of its owner, a sphere will obey the next sentient being that touches it.

The **Faithful Knot** is actually a foot-long cord that, once tied in a knot, cannot be untied by anyone else. This cord can be cut by a sword stroke or similar action.

The **Glow Cube** is a one-inch-square cube of wood that glows a pale green. It gives off too little light to see by, but is visible from as far as 90' away in a dark room. These were originally used to mark the edges of the paths in the Orlow gardens.

Proof that some things have not changed is the **Helm of Blonding**. When this helmet is placed on the player's head it will turn his or her hair blonde for a week. This has no effect, other than the fact that some acquaintances may not recognize the player immediately (which can be a bother if he is your banker or creditor). It is probably safe to surmise that the Helm was created at Frantasy's request, as Orlow the Indolent was said to be bald.

The **Robe of Drying** will remove all the moisture from the skin of a human-sized player. This robe was created by Orlow to dry himself quickly on cold winter mornings. It operates similarly to the Rag of Drying, but works once a day on less than a pint of water.

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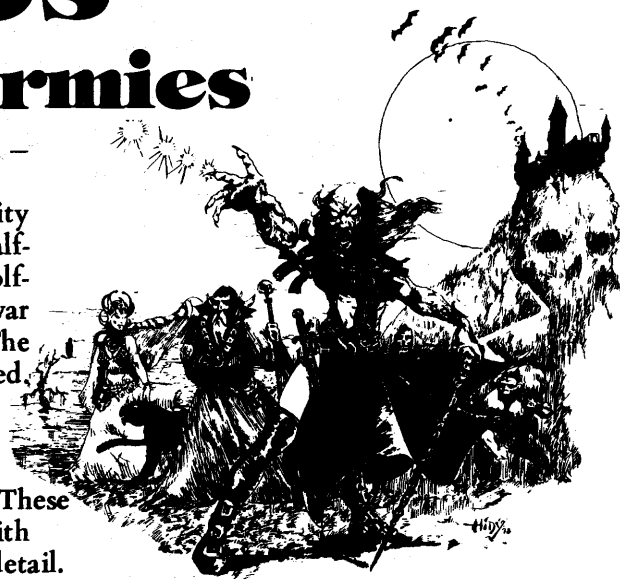
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DEALER INQUIRIES WELCOME

Augury

(cont. from page 34)

Down Styphon

Kenneth Hulme

DOWN STYPHON by Mike Gilbert, published by Fantasy Games Unlimited, is a set of Musket & Pike rules-for miniatures combat, based on the book *Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen* by H. Beam Piper.

The basic situation is that Calvin Morrison of the Pennsylvania State Troopers gets dumped in an alternate worldline — the Aryan Transpacific, Styphon's House Subsector. In this alternate world, the Aryans, rather than moving west out of Asia into Europe, went east, crossed the Pacific, and settled America from west to east.

Some time in the past, a priest of a minor healing god — Styphon — mixed sulphur, charcoal, and saltpeter with predictable results. Thus was born a gunpowder theocracy which controlled the known world.

Calvin lands in the Principality of Hostigos, which is beset by Styphon's minions, and about to get creamed at 3-1. Calvin (now Kalvan), with memories of high school chemistry and a background as a Thirty Years War nut, makes a better brand of gunpowder, invents trunions, rifling, battle planning, cocktail hours and a host of other goodies, and gains the title of Lord Kalvan. With tactics cribbed from Gustavus Adolphus, Jeb Stuart and Tilly, he manages to whip Styphon's House and gets created High King.

Mike Gilbert's rules give a real feel for the mixed and matched technologies and tactics of *Lord Kalvan*. He uses die roll plus one in the Firing

tables to account for Kalvan's better gunpowder; well balanced movement capability between artillery, infantry and cavalry, and excellent treatment of the mercenaries which are a vital, yet fickle, part of the Styphon forces.

The background information, composition of forces and illustrations are excellent. In fact, most of the 18 pages of rules are top-notch. There are a few points which need clarification, however.

Perhaps the most irritating glitch in the rules is the continual switching between the use of the terms "men" and "figures." In the beginning Gilbert says that one casting = twenty men. Is a casting a single lead statue, or a strip of lead statues? We must assume he means one lead statue = 20 simulated men. Later in the rules he says that there are "two gunners needed at all times to operate gun," and in the same section that "each gun must have at least two artillerymen figures to fire." Does the gun need two men or forty men? The logical guess is two men.

Perhaps most frustrating to the reader of *Lord Kalvan* who picks up the rules is the lack of consideration for some of the very important parts of the book. For example, the book and the Composition of Forces Table lists for available artillery: Light guns, Heavy guns, 3 brass 18 lb. mercenary guns, 4 lb. guns for Kalvan, and 8 lb. guns. The Firing rules for artillery show only Light guns (under 8 lb.) and Heavy guns (to 12 lb.) No mention is made of the other artillery shown in the Composition. Table 1 shows one way to handle the extra artillery.

The original table shows ½ die at 36" and 1 die at closer ranges for Heavy guns, and ½ die at 24" or 12" with 1 die at 8" for Light guns.

The most serious discrepancy in the rules is consideration of Kalvan's Mounted Rifles (an elite

Table 1 Round Ball

Range	Hvy. Guns	18 lbers	Lt. Guns	4 lbers
36"	½ die damage	1 die	N/A	N/A
24"	1 die	1 die	½ die	½ die
12"	1 die	1 die	1 die	½ die
8"	1 die	1 die	1 die	1 die

corps) and Mobile Force (dragoons). According to the book, these units are almost totally responsible for Kalvan's victories. In the rules, movement is given for Mounted Infantry, but none for Mounted Rifles unless they are thrown in the catch-all "Other" class. Styphon Forces, which have elite units, get morale boosters, but the Mounted Rifles do not. The Mounted Rifles should move as fast or faster than Light Cavalry and have a morale factor equal to or greater than other elite units (after all, they've got Kalvan with his innovations, and the other side doesn't).

As far as the layout of the rules, tables, etc., almost everything is OK. The tables could use some lines to help delineate things better, and all the rules for handling Cavalry should be in one place rather than scattered throughout 18 pages.

Once the purchaser of DOWN STYPHON gets past the initial few bugaboos, however, the game is very playable. With a few modifications, it can be used for any Musket & Pike period battle simulation.

One note on getting started in the miniatures aspect of the game: Unless you're independently wealthy, set up in 15mm scale. The number of figures required even for a skirmish can get expensive. A strip of 5 infantry in 15mm (100 men at 20-1) sets you back 75-85 cents. A single figure (20 men) in 25mm will cost that much.

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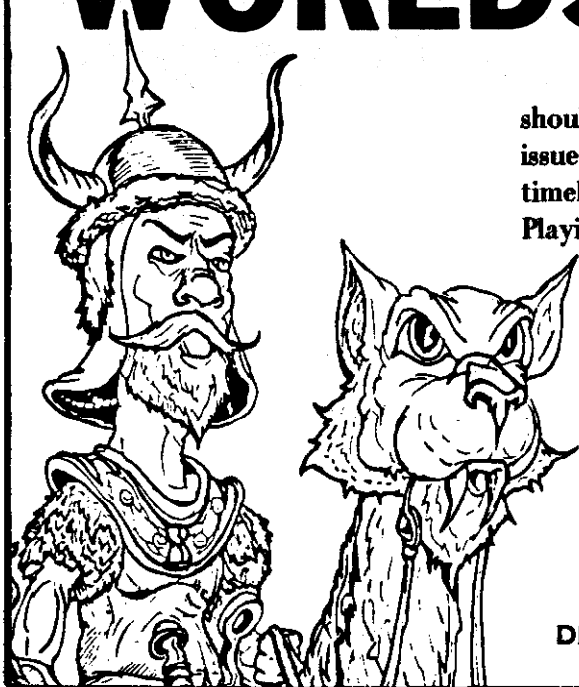
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Tell them you saw it in *The Dragon*



The Game's the Thing

(cont. from page 2)

booth in the exhibit area, and to get somewhat lost. Where was TSR Periodicals? Where was my kindly editor? Is there more than one GenCon??

Then I took a couple of sharp rights, found myself in uncharted territory, and came upon my comrades. I could tell by the sign over the booth that they were in there somewhere, but all I could see were the backs of a few dozen heads.

"Yipes!" said my eyes to my brain. "These people are all trying to buy magazines!? What have they done with my pals?"

I managed to waddle through the humanity, swinging the camera case ever so slightly (a little extra elbow room; another old newspaper trick) and got to the front of the booth without so much as a frown from the people I had aced out of line. This was my second clue: Gamers are very good people, I said to myself. "I'm here," I said to no one in particular.

I was told, in actions rather than words, to get my rear in gear and start helping customers. The joint was jumpin', and business was more brisk than a zero-degree air elemental until about noon.

That was my GenCon baptism of fire. In less than three hours I gazed upon hundreds of faces, spoke to dozens of people. I read a few famous name tags and was silently awed. Hey, J. Eric Holmes just walked within three feet of me!

I met, for a few seconds each, enough gamers to double the population of the town where I grew up. I smiled, they smiled, and at noon on Friday I said to myself, Gamers are extraordinarily good people. "Can I go out and take some pictures now?" I said to my kindly editor.

The answer, in a word, was no. In fact, I ended up spending the majority of my weekend in the booth, saying things like "That'll be \$5.10." Because tournaments have a tendency to run long, and because I was the only one of the Dragon staff who didn't have tournaments to run . . . you can figure out the rest.

I hope I've made it clear that I'm not complaining. The people I met at the Periodicals booth, with just a couple of easily forgettable exceptions, were instinctively courteous and unflagging in their patience with me, at times when the new kid on the block couldn't pick up the ball and run with it.

"Do you have any back issues of The Dragon with the article about the Alchemist class?"

"Uh, I think that was quite a while ago, so we probably don't. But I don't know for sure . . ."

"Okay. Let me look at a few and I'll see if I can find it. Thanks for your help." And a smile. Always a smile.

At closing time Friday evening, I said to myself, Gamers are smilingly good people. "Now there's nothing left to take pictures of," I said to no one in particular.

Friday night I set out to explore the labyrinthine hallways of the five-building convention complex, with a twofold purpose: To help me find my way around the next day, when I hoped I'd have time to start soaking up atmosphere, and to scout around for the (a) Coke machine, (b) bathroom and (c) soft place to sit down nearest the Periodicals booth.

I found my three minor objectives, not necessarily in that order, and filed their coordinates away for future reference. Then I went for a stroll, and I was dumbfounded by what I saw.

Within seconds after striding out of the shut-down exhibit area, I entered another world — a Fantasyland unlike anything Walt Disney ever dreamed of.

There was a sea of tables and chairs lining the sides of the wide concourse which connects three of the five buildings. The chairs were filled with people hunched over boards, or formations of figures, or both. There were a third again as many people who had just set up shop on the floor. A table and a place to sit are nice, but the game's the thing.

I walked past people who were just taking the cellophane off their brand-new *Ultimatum*. Others were pushing well-worn counters across a *D-Day* board that had to be almost as old as they were. A few were

scrunched into corners, hanging on every word of their new *Dungeon Masters Guide*.

The "communities" in this world were small, sometimes as small as two or three people and usually no larger than six or eight. Some were new friends; others were old adversaries. They all had two very important things in common: a love of gaming, and . . .

"We need a fourth player. Would you like to sit in and help us learn how to play this monstrosity?"

"Why, you old dog, you! That's exactly what I did to you the last time we played. I should have known it would come back to haunt me."

"I used to live in St. Louis, too, but I moved to Minneapolis a year ago. Maybe we could start playing by mail."

. . . a love for each other.


I was deeply impressed by the camaraderie, the casual sort of it-goes-without-saying friendliness that I felt as I rubbernecked my way along one long row of tables and then back along the other.

For many people, this Fantasyland is what makes a convention. They can play a casual game, renew an old rivalry, kibitz over someone's shoulder, or compare notes with a new friend on their versions of the world of Tekumel.

You don't have to enter a single tournament or buy even one measly miniature to make GenCon worth going to — although it's practically impossible to not do one or both if you're in for the duration. The fundamental purpose of any convention is to get together. And judging by what I saw Friday night (as well as on other strolls throughout the weekend), the people at GenCon XII were *very together*, indeed.

Saturday morning dawned gray and rainy, but there was sunshine in my heart and a renewed spring in my step. In many respects, this would still be my first day at GenCon. I had not yet done any protracted window-shopping in the dealer area, and my paltry supply of spending money was burning a hole in my psyche. I didn't know the first thing

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about how tournaments were run. I knew there were more famous people I hadn't ogled. And I had yet to check out the Michelob on tap in the student union.

I got my first furlough from booth duty in mid-morning. I counted my cash (not a very time-consuming task) and set out looking for things to fritter it away on.

But before I spend anything, I gotta case the joint. And what a joint! It's the world's biggest game-hobby store. If you can't find what you want somewhere in this treasure trove of games, literature and little metal men, it's only because someone hasn't thought of manufacturing it — yet.

I'm not into miniatures of any kind. The last smaller-than-life-size soldier I came into contact with was an olive drab machinegunner I found in the nether regions of my closet about ten years ago.

But I envy people who work and play with figures. I can appreciate the beauty of Napoleon's elite or a Panzer kamp-gruppe deployed and ready to engage in tabletop combat. I marveled at the expertise I saw manifested in the entries for the figure-painting contest sponsored by TSR Periodicals.

And I pitied those same people at GenCon, because there was such an array of miniatures for sale that no "junkie" could possibly hope to completely satisfy his craving. It's like being set loose in a room full of dollar bills for 30 seconds and being told you can keep whatever you can carry away: It would be real nice to have that opportunity, but it would be terrible to have to leave so much behind.

Virtually all of the game manufacturers I'd ever heard of were represented. Their physical stock was not as impressive to me as the miniatures exhibits — perhaps because it's not easy for them to display dozens of games in a few square feet of exhibit space and still be able to see the people on the other side of the tabletop.

But if the game guys, or any other exhibitors, didn't happen to bring along the item you want, you could put in an immediate order for it. That sure beats gambling your cash on the vagaries of the U. S. Postal Service or risking the chance of your order being received and accidentally shuttled into the "when we get around to it" file in somebody's accounting office.

It's better than being in a store. You can actually look at the contents of a game box and spend a few minutes checking them out. In some stores, you pay the price of the game for the right to rip off the plastic wrapping — and you take your chances on what's inside. If you bought a pig in a poke at GenCon, you have no right to beef.

Even if you couldn't see what you were buying at all times, the best "store clerks" in the business were at your service. Not every booth was always staffed with totally competent personnel (Periodicals being a good example thereof, thanks to yours truly), but the vast majority of the people who carted boxes and made change all weekend were in the upper echelon of their respective specialties. They know what they're talking about when they're answering a question.

I tested one of the guys at the Avalon Hill booth.

"Is it still possible to order the original edition of *Jutland*?" I asked. (I own the game, and I've never met another soul who had it or at least would admit it.)

"Oh, no, that was revised years ago."

"Well, how much of a change is the revised edition from the original edition?"

"Oh, there are a lot of things. I wouldn't know where to start . . ."

If he had said, "I don't know." I would have understood. But I appreciated the effort anyway. He looked to be about 25, which means he would have been in high school at about the time I was trying to win the battle of the North Sea on my kitchen floor.

I saw dozens of people in rapt conversation with each other, across the tables that separated sellers from buyers, in one all-too-short excursion

around the exhibit area. As I returned to the booth of my birth, I said to myself, This isn't the only booth where the customers are greeted with charm and consideration. Isn't there one malcontent in this whole assemblage? "Hi. Can I help you?" I said to no one in particular.

* * *

Well, sad to say, I met my first malcontent Saturday night. I was waiting out the finals of a hard-fought "Alexander The Great" tournament which my aforementioned kindly editor was overseeing in Room 106-B or whatever. At about 11:30 the room still contained four people playing a casual game on one side; five kibitzers, consultants or other miscellaneous persons, and the two "Alexander" finalists, who had half an hour left to decide the fate of Persia. Persia, surveying his deteriorating position, was eating a cheeseburger.

In came two more lads, one of whom entered into animated conversation with someone he knew. The other parked his rather substantial posterior on the nearest chair and assumed the pose of a manic depressive Buddha.

After 30 seconds, under his breath: "Will you hurry up?" to his companion. Then, looking toward the door: "This is really a drag."

He got louder and grumpier as the minutes went by. He wasn't obnoxious or anything near that, but he sure wasn't having a good time.

By the time the two of them left, I had the feeling that the last 10 to 15 minutes of boredom he'd had to go through had soured that guy on GenCon for at least a long time.

I wish I had turned to him and said hello, tried to fill those few minutes with something for him. I wish that I could have stopped soaking up the atmosphere and done something to contribute to it.

But I didn't do that, and I didn't see him on Sunday. I'll always wonder if he ever came back.

* * *

The first half of Sunday was a breeze. Business was leisurely in our part of the exhibit area.

Three quarters of the people who stopped at the Periodicals booth on Sunday were there to ooh and aah over the fascinating underground orc castle which was dreamed up and built by Steve Brown. If you haven't seen the photos and story on it elsewhere in this issue, let them entertain you — as soon as you finish what you're reading, of course.

I got to strap on the old leather bag full of lenses and see what GenCon looks like through the viewfinder of a camera. Bidding a not-so-fond farewell to the display rack of TD back issues, I began the task of capturing the essence of GenCon on a 36-exposure roll of 35mm film.

After 20 minutes or so, I happened past the glass display cases where the entries for the figure-painting contest had been imprisoned. A couple of people I recognized as contestants began to beseech me for a way to extricate their entries. So . . . back to the booth.

"I need the keys for the exhibit cases again. Some people want to get their figures out." For each entrant I accommodated, one or two more appeared to take his or her place.

After unlocking a display case for about the eighth time, I decided to take off the camera bag. Clearly, this was my calling for this place and time.

For the next two hours, I opened and closed display cases and watched people meticulously re-pack their prides and joys. One guy went all the way back to his car, eating up time for him and me both, because he needed one more little box to pack a few pieces of micro armor so they wouldn't have to be crowded and possibly damaged.

I closed the display case and graciously declined his apologies for having to make me wait.

"No problem," I said. I smiled. And I understood. And I felt a little bit proud of myself and a whole lot happy.

* * *

"Attention. Attention. The dealer area is now closed to the public."

It was 1:00, and a hush fell over the land. It was an audible silence, especially in the far end of the exhibit area, away from the "public" area where casual games and tournaments were still going on. The bubble of

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Fantasyland had not burst, but it had taken heavy damage.

Sunday afternoon is trade-show time in the exhibit area, when dealers can mingle (as if they haven't already) and can be buyers instead of sellers for a chance. At the least, it's a period of time that is well spent by everyone in the exhibit area. Those who aren't signing contracts, shooting the breeze or catching forty winks can always get the tick backed up to the loading dock and start headin' out. Can't blame anybody for leaving early; some of them came a long way to get there, and that proves they knew it'd be worth their while.

* * *

It is with no small measure of pride that I tell you I was one of the last people to leave the Parkside campus as GenCon XII faded into memory. John Baillie, who does the best impersonation of an Englishman I'd ever seen, was tied up (figuratively) overseeing the tournament finals of "Green Things," and we didn't head for Lake Geneva until well past sunset. Being the loyal fellows that we are, none of us from The Dragon would consider leaving John behind. But there were some mighty oaths being flung from the parking lot in the general direction of the Znutar.

I, for one, didn't mind the wait. It gave me time to reflect. This is supposed to be a story about first impressions, right? Well, I said to myself that night, what's your first impression?

I thought it out, word by word, in my mind. When I got home that night, I wrote it down. A week later, it became the first three paragraphs of the story you just finished reading.

Rumbles

(cont. from page 2)

mind". A campus policeman said that dozens of *D&D* games were being played by "very secretive groups".

All of this has been grist for the journalists' mill, and has resulted in some pretty bizarre headlines, all playing on the esoteric aspects of the game, some slanted from the incorrect assumptions. A few choice samples that we have seen here, and only the gods know how many we haven't seen, include "Missing youth could be on adventure game", "Is Missing Student Victim of Game?", "Intellectual fantasy results in bizarre disappearance", "Student May Have Lost His Life to Intellectual Fantasy Game", "Student feared dead in 'dungeon'", and more of the like.

The most important consideration here is that all of the *supposed* link to this unfortunate incident was somehow *assumed* to exist, when in truth no such link has been proven.

No one connected with *D&D*, from the authors, through the editors, typesetters, proofreaders down to the final stage, the shippers, ever envisioned anything like this happening. The slightest hint that this game somehow *may* have cost someone their life is horrifying to each and every one of us.

If this is true, and the worst fears are realized when this mystery is resolved, something is drastically wrong. If James is located and all ends happily, the amount of suffering and grief has certainly been disproportionate.

If the worst is true, let it serve as a painful and sad lesson to all of us that play games, that games are simply games, meant to be amusing diversions and a way to kill time in a fun fashion, and nothing more.

TSR has never ever suggested that *D&D* was meant to be acted out. How could it be, when half of what makes it so much fun — magic — can not be simulated?

This incident could conceivably affect each of you who reads this. If the 'bizarre' tag sticks, all of us should consider the idea that we might meet with scorn, or macabre fascination, or be branded as 'intellectual loonies'. In view of the distortions caused by the media, it may become incumbent now upon all of us to actively seek to correct the misconceptions now formed or forming whenever and wherever possible.

For now, we can only hope and pray that James will be located and in good health. No game is worth dying for . . .

* * *

You may have noticed a couple of new names on the masthead. THE DRAGON is growing, and is no longer a one man show. John Baillie is our new UK Correspondent/Editor. When he returns to England at the end of the summer, he will be laying the groundwork for a regular feature on Wargaming in the UK. How soon it begins to appear depends on John and the vagaries of overseas mail.

As the size of TD increases, we are trying to share the good fortune with those that made it possible; you, the readers, and the authors and artists whose works fill our pages. We are paying more than ever before for stories and art. Our being able to do that helps us get more and more top quality material, to the benefit of the reader.

We have some extraordinary plans for the next few issues that I'd like to share with you. In TD 31, we will have a feature story on adventuring in that most dangerous of all the dangerous outdoor areas; the jungle. Shades of Tarzan and Bomba the Jungle Boy! Along with that feature will be included a top rate piece of fiction, probably a Gar Fox tale of Niall of the Far Travels.

TD 32 will see the inclusion of the winning module from the IDDC. We are researching the logistics at this writing, and have no idea yet of how large it will be.

TD 33 will have the new MAPPING THE DUNGEONS DM List. This one promises to be a bigger monster than the last, with new listings all over the world. In the future, TD will compile the list once a year and publish it.

TD 34 (there's a number that was only a pipe dream three years ago) will have another insert. It will be one of three things, not selected as of this writing: 1) the runner-up in the IDDC; 2) another game from Tom Wham; 3) the long awaited DIRT.

The inclusion of the IDDC winner will inaugurate a new pricing structure for TD. Issues with a major insert/inclusion will be 25-50¢ more per issue on the stands. Subscription prices will remain unaffected. The most recent game-inclusion was supposed to have inaugurated the policy (TD 28, containing *TAGTFOS*, should have been priced at \$2.50), but we overlooked the change in the rush of getting ready for GenCon and finishing THE BEST OF TD. Our oversight was your good fortune.

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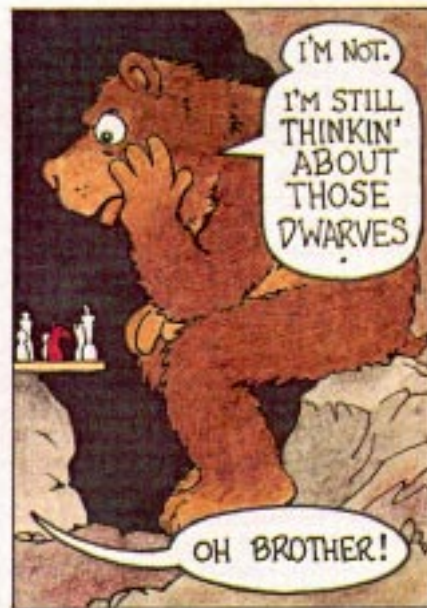
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There's More to Come

Space does not permit us to squeeze in all of our coverage of GenCon XII in this issue, so . . .

In next month's TD, we'll have a feature with color photos of the winners in the figure-painting contest sponsored by TSR Periodicals. There will be story and photo coverage of the Strategists Club banquet. And in the Dragon's Augury next month, TD Editor Tim Kask will take you on a stroll, booth by booth, through the exhibit area. Until then . . .



Dragon's Bestiary

(formerly *Featured Creature*)

CURST

Created by Ed Greenwood

FREQUENCY: Uncommon

NO. APPEARING: 2-11

ARMOUR CLASS: As clothed (usually 7)

MOVE: 12"

HIT DICE 1-10+ (As prior to curse)

% IN LAIR: Nil

TREASURE TYPE: All possible, usually nil

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: See below

SPECIAL ATTACKS: Nil

SPECIAL DEFENSES: See below

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 85%

INTELLIGENCE: See below

SIZE: M (rarely, L or S)

PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil

ATTACK DEFENSE MODES: Nil

Curst are unfortunate creatures who have been placed under a curse that will not let them die. They are of humanoid race, almost invariably (98%) of pure human stock. In the process of becoming Curst they lose any magical or psionic abilities they may have possessed, although other abilities (such as strength bonuses or thieving skills) are unimpaired. Alignment becomes Chaotic Neutral, and their skin becomes very white; their eyes glitter. They gain the power of superior infravision (90') and prefer darkness to light, although the latter has no adverse affect upon them. Thus they frequent subterranean regions. They apparently retain no sense of smell, and (although they retain prior linguistic knowledge) tend not to speak.

The horrible existence of these beings usually destroys their minds (if not their cunning). Curst retain their original intelligence only 11% of the time, and there is an 05% chance every turn (*not* cumulative) that any Curst will act irrationally — i.e. breaking off a fight to caper, sing, draw with a finger on a nearby wall, or merely stare at something.

Curst can only be destroyed by removing the curse that binds them to their hateful existence (cf. Remove Curse). They are immune to psionic attack and mind-related spells (such as Charm, Sleep, Hold, and ESP) and are similarly unaffected by cold- and fire-based attacks and the life-energy draining effects of various creatures. They can be struck by all weapons, and (save for weapons which do additional damage due to heat or cold) these have normal effect. When Curst are reduced to zero HP, they fall to the ground, paralyzed, and lie there until their wounds have healed (at the rate of 1 HP per day, unless magically healed, i.e. by a kindly/foolish cleric). If Curst are dismembered or mutilated, they will regenerate new limbs, organs, etc. with no additional loss of time — so that when they reach full HP, they will be whole once again. Curst are not, strictly speaking, Undead, and thus cannot be turned. Holy water does them no damage. Curst do not age.

Curst fight with normal weapons, and in battle will often snatch up weapons from the fallen if these are superior to their

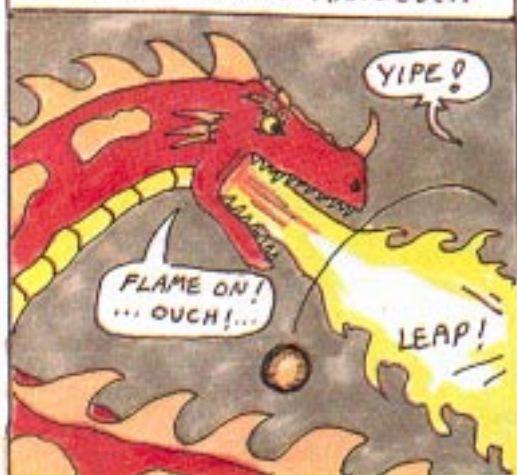


own. However, they never make use of missile or thrown weapons (save as crude clubs), fire, or magical rods, staves, rings, or artifacts. Often (46%) they will be armed with magical Swords of Cold, faintly glowing blades which do 1D6+3 damage and radiate a 5' radius chill that inhibits fire, prevents oil from igniting, etc. If weaponless, Curst can bite, kick and claw savagely, doing 1-2 HP of damage per attack.

Curst tend to favour leather armor, and usually wear cloaks and boots. Their garb is always of a dark color. Occasionally (15%) the bodies of Curst are infested with Rot Grubs (q.v.) and when so afflicted they will have 1D6 fewer HP, although fighting skills will be unaffected. Note that the grubs will be seeking a better meal.

Creation of a Curst is accomplished (by an evil magic user or cleric of sufficient power) by means of a Bestow Curse spell and a full Wish spell. The spell caster must physically touch the victim, successfully casting the Bestow Curse as he or she does so, and within four rounds commence casting the Wish spell. The DM must determine the necessary wording, which may well be learned only through costly research. Curst are in no way under the control of their creator, nor will they serve that person unless it will enable them to find the mercy of death through removal of the curse. Often, coming to know their cruel doom, they will attack their creator, hoping that he or she will be forced to destroy them in self-defense. In rare cases they may cooperate with party members to this end. Once destroyed, Curst cannot be resurrected or animated to become Undead. Their bodies crumble rapidly into dust, which may be of value to magic users or alchemists.

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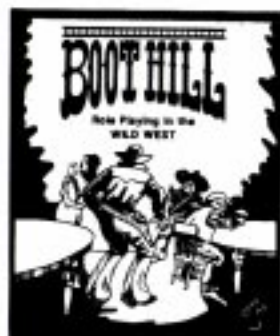


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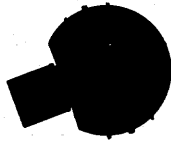
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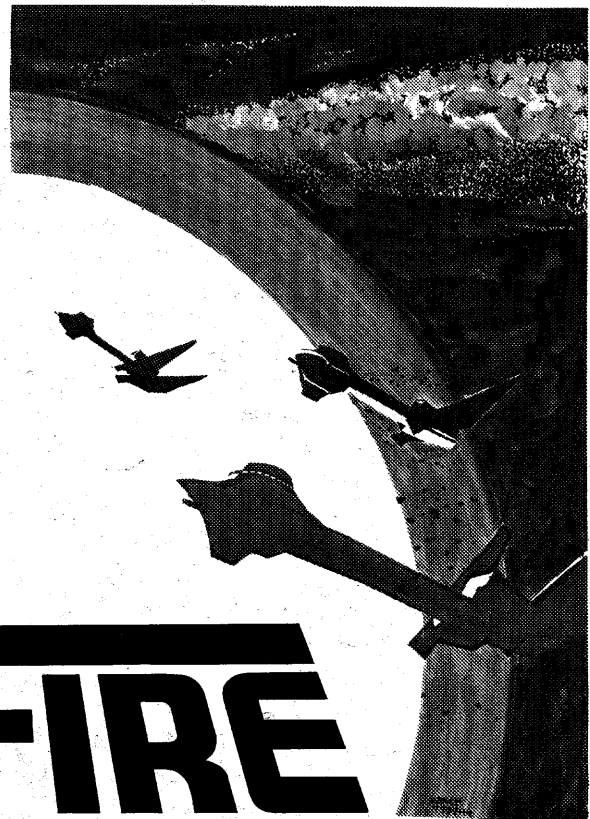
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